Response to Intervention (RtI)
Family & Community Partnering:
“On the Team and At the Table”
Toolkit

Developed by:
The Colorado Department of Education

June 2009
Colorado Department of Education
Acknowledgments

Many people provided ideas and input into the development of this training module. Educators and family members worked side-by-side to create the vision of authentic family-school-community partnering which will support EVERY student’s school success. Although these materials were developed specifically as a component of the Colorado RtI framework, they are intended to be applicable to ALL family-school partnering initiatives as represented by the diverse contributors to this effort. As we can’t individually name them all, we will formally acknowledge the following supporting groups and agencies:

Colorado Department of Education:
- Exceptional Student Leadership Unit
- Early Childhood Unit/Office of Teaching and Learning
- Gifted Education Unit
- Language, Culture, and Equity
- Prevention Initiatives

Colorado Parent Information and Resource Center (CPIRC)
Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee (CSEAC)
PEAK Parent Center
Numerous family advocates, professionals, and other interested individuals

For more information, please contact:

Cindy Dascher
Parent and Family Consultant
Exceptional Student Leadership Unit
Colorado Department of Education
1560 Broadway Suite 1175
Denver, CO 80202
Email: dascher_c@cde.state.co.us
Office: 303.866.6876
Fax: 303.866.6767

Cathy Lines
RtI Project Support
Colorado Department of Education
Colorado State Board of Education

State Board of Education Mission and Vision

Mission
The mission of the Colorado State Board of Education is to provide all of Colorado’s children equal access to quality, thorough, uniform, well-rounded educational opportunities in a safe and civil learning environment.

Vision
All children in Colorado will become educated and productive citizens.

Colorado State Board of Education

Bob Schaffer
Chairman
4th Congressional District

Randy DeHoff
Vice-Chairman
6th Congressional District

Elaine Gantz Berman
1st Congressional District

Jane Goff
7th Congressional District

Peggy Littleton
5th Congressional District

Marcia Neal
3rd Congressional District

Angelika Schroeder
2nd Congressional District

Dwight D. Jones
Commissioner of Education

Robert Hammond
Deputy Commissioner of Education

Ed Steinberg
Assistant Commissioner of Education
# Table of Contents

Introduction and Preface to Toolkit Use

I. Training Materials
   - *Essential RtI Partnering Information* Slides with Notes
   - *Activities* Slides with Notes
   - *Sample Stakeholder Back-to-School* Slides with Notes

II. Universal Tier: Tools and Resources
   - School
     - Sample Principal Home Letter/Newsletter Article
     - Sample Principal Community Letter
     - Colorado RtI Stakeholder Brochure (English)
     - Colorado RtI Stakeholder Brochure (Spanish)
     - Sample Reminder Cards (English)
     - Sample Reminder Cards (Spanish)
     - Sample RtI Partnering Job Descriptions
     - Sample School-Parent Agreement (Policy) Compact: Title I, Part A, ESEA
     - Six Types of Involvement in Family-School-Community Partnerships: English & Spanish
     - Partnering Vocabulary
     - Partnering Stories From the Field
     - Secondary Schools’ Fact Sheet
   - Classroom
     - Sample Teacher Letter
     - Sample Family Sharing Sheet
     - Sample *Partners In Learning* Pledge
     - Building Trusting Family-Teacher Partnerships
     - Two-Way Communication: A Teacher’s Practical Points

III. Targeted/Intensive Tiers: Tools and Resources
   - RtI Problem-Solving Partner Packet
     - Best Practices In RtI Problem-Solving
     - Questions for Families, Educators, and Community Resources to Ask About the Problem-Solving Process
     - Sample Problem-Solving Family Invitation Phone Script
     - Sample Stakeholder Problem-Solving Card/Brochure Insert (English)
     - Sample Stakeholder Problem-Solving Card/Brochure Insert (Spanish)
     - Sample Problem-Solving Process Referral with Family Input, Student Strengths, Community Resources
     - Sample Problem-Solving Team Meeting Invitation
IV. Planning and Evaluation: Tools and Resources

- Data Sources
  - School-Wide
    - Tiered RtI Family and Community Partnering Checklist
    - Measure of School, Family and Community Partnerships
      (Davis et al.)
  - Stakeholders: Educators, Families, Community Resources
    - RtI Partnering Survey and Needs Assessment
    - Planning Team Feedback
    - FAQs
    - Challenges and Solutions

- Plan Templates
  - Tiered Planning Templates
  - Sample Completed Templates

V. Web and Text Resources

- RtI Partnering Resources
- Family-School-Community Partnering Resources
- Colorado Partnering Resources
- Colorado Department of Education RtI Family-School-Community Partnering Resources

VI. References
Introduction and Preface to Toolkit Use
Introduction

RtI Family & Community Partnering: “On the Team and At the Table”

“We believe that a more authentic process, that is an integral part of Response to Intervention, is having parents at the table right from the beginning to achieve a true partnership, again premised on the notion that parents know more about their child than anyone else will.”

- Ed Steinberg, Assistant Commissioner, Colorado Department of Education

The Response to Intervention (RtI) Family and Community Engagement Module is aligned with the RtI framework constructed by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE, 2008b). The module is designed to support each Colorado school system in partnering with families and community resources. The goal is that educators, family members and community resources are on the team and at the table in supporting every student’s school success. Paralleling the multi-tiered RtI model, a tiered family-school-community partnering process organizes the components into universal, targeted and intensive levels. This allows for effective, efficient use of time and resources.

The module contains a training-of-trainer presentation for family-school-community teams, with various experiential activities. Key components are definition, rationale (research and laws), challenges and solutions, RtI partnering and planning/evaluation. There are school-wide and individual surveys, needs assessments, checklists and feedback forms so that schools can make data-based decisions about their partnering work. Tiered tools are adaptable samples intended to be used as needed by a specific school community and/or within any special programs.

The desired outcome is that teachers, families and community resources are sharing responsibility for education as equal partners – in every school.

The evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: families have a major influence on their children’s achievement in school and through life …When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more (Henderson & Mapp, 2002, pg 7).
Colorado Response to Intervention (RtI)

The following description of family and community engagement in RtI is taken from *Response to Intervention (RtI): A Practitioner’s Guide to Implementation* (CDE, 2008b).

**Core Principles:** Through a process which brought educational and family leaders together from all parts of Colorado, a set of core RTI principles was developed to guide the state initiative. Two of the principles relate directly to partnering with families and community resources (bolded below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We believe that...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• ALL children can learn and achieve high standards as a result of effective teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All students must have access to a rigorous, standards-based curriculum and research-based instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intervening at the earliest indication of need is necessary for student success (Pre K-12).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A comprehensive system of tiered interventions is essential for addressing the full range of student needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student results improve when ongoing academic and behavioral performance data inform instructional decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collaboration among educators, families, and community members is the foundation for effective problem-solving and instructional decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ongoing and meaningful involvement of families increases student success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All members of the school community must continue to gain knowledge and develop expertise in order to build capacity and sustainability of RtI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Effective leadership at all levels is crucial for the implementation of RtI. (p. 1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Six Components:** The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) recognizes six components significant to RtI implementation:

1) Leadership  
2) Curriculum and Instruction  
3) School Climate and Culture  
4) Problem-Solving/Consultation  
5) Assessment/Progress Monitoring  
6) Family and Community Engagement

**Family and Community Engagement:** When families, schools, and communities work together, children are more successful in school and schools improve. Effective partnerships include parents, families, students, community members and educators. Indicators of an effective partnership include:
1) Sharing information
2) Problem-solving
3) Celebrating student successes.

Central to effective partnership is the recognition of shared responsibility and shared ownership of student challenges and successes.

In forming partnerships, it is important to nurture the collaborative process. To develop true collaboration, parents and families must be fundamentally involved in the entire educational experience. Parents should be recognized as having important information and expertise that they can contribute to the partnership. It is important for school personnel to provide the parents with information and empower them as equal partners in supporting their children’s learning. At Tier I, parent involvement in school decision-making leads to an improved positive school climate. Parents and families are seen as key partners in all aspects of RtI, but their role may shift at each tier of intervention. In particular, at the targeted (Tier II) and intensive (Tier III) levels their expertise regarding the individual student is vital. At these tiers, members of the student’s family may provide information about the student and strategies that will lead to improved student outcomes.

Collaboration is more than simply working together and more than just linkage; it is agreeing to formally work together to achieve mutually desired outcomes if one is to believe the adage, “it takes a village to raise a child”, then the community has a vested interest in supporting a positive school climate, which research has shown to better academic results. It is critical that schools recognize that cultural understanding requires more than just awareness. Understanding and respect for cultural differences is vital when attempting to engage families and foster community support.  (p.9)

Parents/Families/Guardians: Roles and Expectations in Problem-Solving
Parents or guardians are an integral part of the RtI Model and problem-solving process. They should participate and be valued when developing intervention plans. Although requiring parents or guardians to attend problem-solving team meetings may not be appropriate, parents should be strongly encouraged to attend. Parents or guardians are encouraged to participate in team meetings and meet with the case manager/consultant and/or teacher as appropriate, to provide pertinent information about their child’s learning style, difficulty, or area of advancement and to ask questions about their child’s progress or lack of progress. Because it may be a new experience for most parents and guardians to be significantly involved in intervention development and progress monitoring, special care must be taken to educate parents or guardians about the steps in the process to ensure engagement.

Key expectations of parents or guardians:
- Collaborate with teachers regarding identified need
- Share information about child and family as appropriate
• Support student learning at home
• Attend problem-solving team meeting and partner in intervention planning and progress monitoring. (p. 24)

The following additional suggestions for family and community engagement are taken from Guidelines for Identifying Students with Specific Learning Disabilities (CDE, 2008a).

Recommended best practices to support family-school partnerships in a RtI model:

• Provide basic written information for ALL families about the RtI framework for the school/district, including answers to commonly asked questions and specific school implementation facts;
• Invite parent to participate in the RtI/Problem-Solving Process when it is initiated for their child;
• Support parents in collecting and sharing their child’s data as a participant in the RtI/Problem-Solving Process and establish ongoing communication;
• Include parents in the intervention planning and monitoring of their child’s progress and encourage home support of student learning;
• Provide copies of detailed intervention plans, diagnostic/prescriptive assessment results, progress monitoring information and other RtI/Problem-Solving Process documents;
• Assign a “family liaison” who might be a school psychologist, social worker, or counselor. The liaison’s role is to support families, community members and school staff throughout the RtI Problem-Solving Process. (p. 33-34)
Preface to Toolkit Use

This toolkit is designed to provide information and tools for implementing the family and community engagement component of RtI. The material is intended for educator, family and community use. Information can be used together as a whole document or by utilizing individual tools and resources as needed. The various topics presented are intended for shared discussion, planning and implementation. Tools are samples and can be adapted for a specific site’s use. There is alignment with the other RtI guidebooks developed by the Colorado Department of Education.

There are six units in this toolkit:

I. Training Materials
   Slide Presentations:
   • *Essential RtI Partnering Information*: This is a comprehensive presentation for training all stakeholders in the most recent research, theory and application of family-school-community partnering. There are five sections: Partnering Definition, Rationale (Research and Law), Challenges and Solutions, Tiered RtI Family and Community Partnering and Planning and Evaluation.
   • *Activities*: These are diverse experiential activities designed to be used in different ways – with the presentation, at established meetings, with team members or individually. The activities are tied to the tools and resources provided in the toolkit. Details such as materials needed and instructions are provided in the notes.
   • *Sample Stakeholder Back-to-School Night Presentation*: These slides are samples, utilizing information from the *Essential RtI Partnering Information* presentation. It is suggested that a presentation be developed by schools which can be shared with all stakeholders about RtI. It would also be available to families and community resources if they become involved in the problem-solving process with their student.

II. Universal Tier: Tools and Resources
   • This is a group of sample tools for educators, families and community resources to use in developing effective partnering at the universal tier for all students. There are two types of materials – one set is school-wide and the other is for classroom teachers.

III. Targeted/Intensive Tiers: Tools and Resources
   • These are two groups of tools for use in the targeted and intensive tiers. One is a RtI Problem-Solving Partner Packet and the other contains some sample ways to share interventions between home and school.
IV. Planning and Evaluation: Tools and Resources
- RtI is a data-based process and this section provides some tools to aid in assessing current status, needs, planning and measuring partnering effectiveness. There are sample planning templates for each tier.

V. Web and Text Resources
- Colorado resources, national sites, and books are identified.

VI. References
- This section cites works used in development of the module toolkit.
I. Training Materials

- *Essential RtI Partnering Information* Slides with Notes
- *Activities* Slides with Notes
- *Sample Stakeholder Back-to-School Presentation* Slides with Notes
Essential RtI Partnering Information
Slides with Notes
Essential RtI Partnering Information Slides with Notes

These slides have notes to guide presentations for stakeholders or for independent study. The slides can be “cut and pasted” for school or stakeholder use in supporting family and community engagement in the RtI process. The presentation will be more understandable if all slides are viewed in sequence, but the five sections can be studied independently. These are:

1. Definition
2. Rationale (Research and Law)
3. Challenges and Solutions
4. Tiered RtI Family and Community Partnering
5. Planning and Evaluation

There is also a brief introduction to RtI.

A toolkit icon indicates when there are written materials, handouts, and resources available on the slide topic. There is a separate set of Activity slides which can be included in this presentation if desired or they can be utilized independently.

There is also a separate set of “Back-to-School” slides which are samples from this presentation organized for easy access to a school site wanting to share information with stakeholders.
Key Points:
- Quote stresses importance of working together.
- Another quote: “Caring for the children we share”.

Ideas to Consider:
- Refer to RtI Family & Community Engagement module for other quotations to help in partnership communications.
- Quotations can be often repeated in communication & publications.
- Develop a unique, site-specific meaningful quotation.

Key Points:
- Families & educators worked together on slides & entire module.
- Preview sessions & feedback opportunities occurred.
- Much thanks to all...

Key Points:
- Outcomes for slides & module material are outlined.

Key Points:
- Time is theme of module.
- Icon seen on slides addresses time specifically.
- Goal is efficient, effective support for student achievement in & out of school.
- Time is often cited as barrier to family-school partnering; ways to overcome this barrier identified throughout module.
- Students benefit significantly when effective relationships are in place.
Key Points:
-Entire RtI Family & Community Engagement Module was developed for easy navigation.
- It can be adapted to individual sites and stakeholder needs.
- Material is to be accessed flexibly.
- Time is our most valuable resource.

Key Points:
- Ask how many are parents themselves.
- Ask to use that lens, as well as their professional role, in interacting with the material.
- Inclusive alternative: ask those who are not parents to think about own school experiences w/their families.
- Because people are in very different places with this information, it is helpful to know what people want to gain from the presentation.

Key Points:
- Hands are symbol of partnership & collaboration for student success.
- RtI is about all students, families, & parts of education.
- RtI is a school-wide framework to increase student achievement.
- Every school in the state will implement RtI by August 2009; it is one of the criteria in law as a requirement for the identification of Specific Learning Disabilities

Ideas to Consider:
- Refer to Colorado RtI website for more information.
Core Colorado RtI Principles

We Believe...

- ALL children can learn and as have high standards as a result of effective teaching.
- All students must have access to a rigorous, standards-based curriculum and research-based instruction.
- Intervening at the earliest indication of need is necessary for student success (Pre K-12).
- A comprehensive system of tiered interventions is essential for addressing the full range of student needs.
- Student results are improved when ongoing academic and behavioral performance data are used to inform instructional decisions.

(CDE, 2008b)

Key Points:
- Core principles were developed by state-wide task force on RtI.

Ideas to Consider:
- Discuss how these relate to your site, situation. Would you add or change any?

Core Colorado RtI Principles

- Collaboration among educators, families, and community members is the foundation to effective problem-solving and instructional decision-making.
- Ongoing and meaningful involvement of families increases student success.
- All members of the school community must continue to gain knowledge and develop expertise in order to build capacity and sustainability.
- Effective leadership at all levels is crucial for the implementation of RtI.

(CDE, 2008b)

Key Points:
- Highlighted principles relate specifically to families, schools & communities partnering for student success.

Six Essential Components of Colorado RtI

- Leadership
- Curriculum & Instruction
- Problem-Solving Process
- Progress Monitoring
- School Culture & Climate
- Family and Community Engagement

(CDE, 2008b)

Key Points:
- Six components established by the RtI Task Force.
- Each component important to implementing RtI.

Ideas to Consider:
- How would each of these areas be defined in your site?
- How are they a component of your RtI framework?

Key Points:
- RtI is a multi-tiered model.
- Read tier descriptions & percentages.
- In Colorado, tiers represent both behavior & academic learning.
- Students move up & down tiers as needed for learning.
- Progress monitoring data drives this process.
- As students move up tiers, provide more intense & specialized instruction.
- Problem-solving process is the circle in the middle, interventions prescribed & monitored by team.
- “Families and communities” surround the triangle.

Ideas to Consider:
- Does your site and/or district have a multi-tiered...
model for student interventions?
-If so, what are some of the specific components?

Key Points:
-Video was made by CDE highlighting core principles & essential components.
-Principals, teachers, families & students share their thoughts.
-Video is overview & appropriate for all stakeholders.

Ideas to Consider:
-A school or district may want to add clips from individual site, relating to specific RtI components seen locally.

Key Points:
-Helpful to have definition of partnering.
-Definition provided is general, specifically describing relationship between families & schools.

Ideas to Consider:
-What is your (team’s, school’s, organization’s) definition of partnering? Check out the activities 1 & 2 on partnering in the module.

Key Points:
-Descriptions of partnering taken directly from CDE.

Ideas to Consider:
-Check out the Response to intervention (RtI): A Practitioner’s Guide to Implementation for more information.
RtI Partnering Principles
- Focus is on coordinating learning between home and school.
- Students are “main actors in their own education” (Epstein et al, 2002). They link home and school.
- RtI is new in many schools; time, patience, and learning are needed; some schools have implemented RtI and partnering; we can learn from them.

Key Points:
- General principles about learning that can help teachers, families, administrators & others understand importance of partnering, & the different dimensions.
- Focuses on student’s learning & how helpful it is to a student to have it “coordinated”.
- The importance of students being able to tie two worlds together is supported in the research.
- Must recognize the many school communities implementing RtI & working with families are in different places with implementation; some need time and practice; some are “there”.

Ideas to Consider:
- Discuss these points and what they mean from your, as well as others’ perspectives.

RtI Partnering Principles
- Money is not needed (or not much) - just a shift in time, conversations, resources and everyday practices; teachers, students, families, and community resources are all available.
- RtI partnering is a transparent process throughout all the tiers for families, students, educators and community resources.
- Mutual accountability for student success is created.

Key Points:
- Important to explore research-based options offering promise in increasing student achievement and success.
- Many people do not think of this “valued added” piece of partnering with families.
- Relationships are based on trust and “no surprises” - both stem from transparency in processes, as in RtI.
- Inclusion of all parties means responsibility is shared.
RtI Partnering Principles

- A struggling student experiences collaborative support and encouragement immediately from home and school.
- The focus is always on student success - measurable goals, progress data and doing what works.
- It is all about ongoing, sustainable, intentional relationships.

Key Points:
- One of important benefits of RtI is students no longer “wait to fail”.
- Families & teachers work together right away when student is struggling; all try to understand the problems.
- This keeps students engaged in the learning process.
- Easier to overcome differences when focusing on big picture & what really counts - students.
- Relationships, relationships, relationships...

RtI Partnering Principles

- Cultural and linguistic differences are directly addressed because:
  - authentic partnering creates common ground;
  - students see their worlds working together;
  - there is a forum to understand the culture of the family and the culture of the school.

Key Points:
- Families & educators alike can be hesitant & afraid to reach out when cultures and languages are different.
- When genuine efforts to TRY, everyone benefits - especially the students. Always try.
- Acknowledge that more time needed when language differences - interpreters and/or cultural liaisons usually a part of the picture.
- Be proactive, work with community resources.
- Ask students how to share about school with families—this honors their knowledge and insight.

Ideas to Consider:
- What ideas can be proactively generated for your school community about establishing intentional partnerships between school staff and families with language differences - having a plan, which can include families, students and community members, helps build in the time and resources in advance.

Key Points:
- When students are learning new concepts, we teach, practice new words.
- Same true if partnering as adults - pronouns shift from “I’s” to “we’s” & focus in on shared goals, data, input, decision-making & responsibilities.
- Always ask “what is best for ‘our student’?” – Might not always be agreement, but will always be a focus.

Ideas to Consider:
- Posting shared language in conference/meeting rooms can cue “team building” and conversation - between all partners.
- Check out activity #3 on partnering in module.

Partnering Vocabulary

- Words: “WE”, “OUR”, “US”
- Goals: What do we want to ACHIEVE TOGETHER?
- Roles: How can WE PARTNER around that?
- Data: How will WE KNOW it is working?
- Input: What does the family or school or community resource THINK, FEEL, KNOW?
- Decisions: WE ALL are “at the table” and “on the team”.
- Responsibilities: What are WE EACH doing?
- Students: What is BEST for OUR student?
Rationale

"...parents are a child’s first teachers..."

Key Points:
-For some, shift in thinking to shared responsibility & equal partnership is contrary to belief systems & practices.
-Stems from training, cultural backgrounds, & own histories.
-Others may ask “why now?” or “where is this coming from?”
-Others: “we can’t add one more thing to our plates” or “there is no more time in the day”.
-For all stakeholders, important to provide answers to questions & present the rationale for why partnering between schools, families and community resources is worth time & effort from all parties.
-Following information intended to provide necessary information to support the shift to having families “on the team and at the table”.

Framework and Standards: “Overlapping Spheres of Influence” and “Caring for the Children We Share” (Epstein et al., 2002)

Epstein’s Six Types of Parent Involvement (1995)
- Parenting
- Communicating
- Volunteering
- Learning at Home
- Decision-Making
- Collaborating with Community

National PTA Standards (2008)
- Welcoming all Families
- Communicating Effectively
- Supporting Student Success
- Speaking Up for Every Child
- Sharing Power
- Collaborating with Community

Key Points:
-These are two frequently cited frameworks for family-school partnering.
-PTA standards recently revised to be more action-based, specific, and provide clarity; words such as “effectively”, “every child”, “all families” and “student success” lend power and strength to message.

The Rationale - Why?

There is a shift from parent involvement to family partnering.
- Family implies all caregivers.
- Partnering is a verb implying ongoing and intentional actions.
- Outcomes: increased accountability for positive student outcomes; research-based interventions.
- Research over thirty years of research supports the effectiveness of family-school collaboration; a research-based practice.
- Law: No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 state that families are “full partners” & must be “meaningful participants”. RtI is mandated in Colorado as one criterion in determining if a child has a specific learning disability (SLD).

Key Points:
- Summary of “why now”.
- Partnering with families is research-based, clearly meeting requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB)
- Law & research - with a focus on outcomes - come together to actively create expectation that families & schools will collaborate actively.
- Real message: It is the right thing to do, the research-based thing to do, and it is the law.

Ideas to Consider:
-Discuss this information and share with school communities so that it creates a common knowledge base.
Why Family-School-Community Partnering? OUR STUDENTS!

“With frequent interactions among schools, families, and communities, more students are more likely to receive common messages from various people about the importance of school, working hard, or thinking creatively of helping one another and staying in school...the more school and home are perceived to be similar, the more students achieve.”

(Jepson et al., 2001)

Key Points;
-Concept puts student as focus & key reason to partner.
-Research proves this as important variable.
-Based in our knowledge of human learning and motivation.
-Important to know what works & why...

Why Family-School-Community Partnering? OUR TIME!

- In the US, students spend 91% of their time from birth - 18 outside of school; once in school, they spend 70% of their waking hours outside of school (Clarke, 1990).
- Generalization of school programs' learning occurs more readily when families are involved. Students learn and retain skills more effectively (Sheridan, 1997).

Key Points:
- Facts from research help understand why coordinating learning at home & school increases achievement.
- Understandings are linked to knowledge of human learning, memory and generalization; spaced application and practice solidifies learning.

Why Family-School-Community Partnering? OUR CULTURES!

- In 2050, 60% of the population in the United States will be multicultural or bilingual. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2004) We are becoming a nation of many cultures and languages, as are our schools.
- School practices (such as frequent communication and having meaningful roles for parents) are a stronger predictor of parent involvement than parents' educational level, income status, or ethnic background. (Epstein, 1991)
- Parents, regardless of educational level, income status, or ethnic background, want their children to be successful in school. Across groups, parents want information about how schools function, children's development/learning, & parents' roles in supporting their children. (Christenson, 1995)

Key Points:
-Applying partnering efforts to families with cultural & linguistic diversity can be challenging, complex.
- Additional time & resources often needed.
-Research cited above validates why & how schools need pursue outreach to those students & families with perseverance and intentionality.
-Tiered RtI partnering is with all families & every student; must be acceptance & knowledge that sometimes need for more, different resources; true both in supporting educator learning, and in communicating with families.

Ideas to Consider:
-Assess school community’s partnering from all stakeholders’ perspectives. Mutual learning is often needed - if so, how can it occur effectively?
Factors Influencing Achievement
1. Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum
2. Challenging Goals/Effective Feedback
3. Parent and Community Involvement
4. Safe and Orderly Environment
5. Collegiality and Professionalism
6. Instructional Strategies
7. Classroom Management
8. Classroom Curricula Design
9. Home Environment
10. Learned Intelligence/Background Knowledge
11. Motivation

Key Points:
- Chart summarizes factors influencing student achievement.
- Two of 11 directly related to families - Parent and Community Engagement and Home Environment.
- Two more, Classroom Management and Motivation relate to home-school coordination.
- Factors might be overlooked—sometimes educators focus on most readily apparent factors like curriculum.
- All home-related factors can be addressed through communication, outreach, information sharing & partnering around interventions.

Ideas to Consider:
- Put these home-related factors “on the agenda” for discussions about improving student achievement.

Key Points:
- Summary of converging research reports on the benefits to partnership.
- Focus on benefit, support & strengthening of learning opportunities for student.

Key Points:
- Summary of converging research reports on the benefits to partnership.
- Focus on benefit, support & strengthening of learning opportunities for student.
Key Points:
- Educational issues have different focus & context in secondary schools compared to elementary schools.
- RtI & family-school-community partnering are examples of phenomenon
- Research has summarized why family-school partnering can be challenging in secondary schools & reasons stem from all parties, including students.

Ideas to Consider:
- If a secondary site, assess current practices and beliefs among teachers, students & families.

Key Points:
- Some specific strategies that have reported effectiveness supporting secondary family-school partnering.

Conclusion: When schools take lead, reach out, make personal contact & provide information, families & students respond (& educators learn too & feel supported!).

Key Points:
- Other proven strategies for developing partnerships at secondary level.
- Students can & should be partners in all initiatives.
- Especially effective strategy at the secondary level – students can do community service hours, calling & inviting parents to events, sharing school information; assignments can be interactive homework, attending class discussion/breakfast coffee hours with families.

Ideas to Consider:
- Forming a student advisory board on partnering with families & communities - with a focus on diverse community recognition.
- Supporting students in creating a “position paper” on recommended practices for teachers & families in partnering around their successful education.
- Marketing it to all stakeholders can be another learning project for students which could include focus groups, neighborhood campaigns.
A High School Student’s Voice

Parent involvement is important because if you don’t have a parent to encourage you and support you - ask about your grades and how you are doing - then you’d think they didn’t care. Then you wouldn’t have that motivation to go out there and try to get a 100% or 90% (on a test), you’ll take whatever you get because no one else is interested. (Sanders, 1998, p.41, as quoted in Epstein et al., 2002).

This was the explanation given by a high school sophomore student in a high school working on its parent partnership program.

Home Environment Components That WORK At ALL LEVELS - Supporting School at Home

1. Communication About School
   - Frequent and systematic discussions with child about school
   - Parents encourage their children regarding schoolwork
   - Parents providing resources to help child do schoolwork
2. Supervision of homework, TV viewing, after-school activities

School Partnering Strategies That Work At All Levels...

- The quality of school-family interactions and the degree to which parents perceive teacher outreach efforts as welcoming were important determinants in how, when and if families became involved with schools. In urban settings, parents were more engaged the more they perceived teachers as:
  - valuing their contributions
  - keeping them informed of child’s strengths and weaknesses
  - providing suggestions

The Law: No Child Left Behind

Defines parent involvement as:
- Regular, two-way and meaningful communication
- An integral role in assisting with their child’s learning
- Full partners in their child’s education

Key Points:
- One high school student’s thoughts are given.

Ideas to Consider:
- Ask students and compile the data; share with all stakeholders.

Key Points:
- Basic actions can improve student achievement & are manageable strategies for most families.
- Important for families to have information & to know how to access support if difficulties.
- Important for educators to embrace concept that for many families actions are how they support the school, teachers & learning - at home vs. more traditional “at school” activities.

Ideas to Consider:
- Discuss how a site might communicate this information to families & community resources who might be able to support after school time.

Key Points:
- Research provides guidance in “the how” of educators partnering with families, including those who may be hesitant.
- Active outreach, ongoing communication & message of value are all important.

Key Points:
- First time in history that Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) ever included a full definition of parent involvement; highlights shown here.
- Some people believe that family component of law will become more central in upcoming reauthorization.
The Law: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004)

IDEA 2004, Congress stressed: “strengthening the role and responsibility of parents and ensuring that families of such children have meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children at school and at home.” 20 U.S.C. 1401(c)(5)(B)

Key Points:
- IDEA 2004 strongly stresses parent role & rights throughout the special education eligibility & IEP process.
- Important to examine practices ensuring families & schools are truly partnering in way Congress intended.
- Important to highlight “home & school” which focuses on importance of coordinating & communicating around instruction & student progress.

Ideas to Consider:
- Discuss how the IEP/special education team currently partners with families in school - referral, assessment planning, eligibility, IEP development, specialized instruction, and monitoring of progress.

The LAW: Colorado Rules for the Administration of the Exceptional Children’s Education Act (ECEA) - Specific Learning Disabilities (CDE, 2007)

| 2.08(6)(b)(ii)(B) | The child does not make sufficient progress to meet state or grade-approved grade-level standards in one or more areas identified in section 2.08(6)(b)(i) when using a process based on scientific, research-based intervention (RtI) as determined by a body of evidence demonstrating...

Key Points:
- Language describing how RtI is a required component in eligibility decisions for Specific Learning Disabilities in Colorado.
- Criteria implemented by August 2009
- Colorado explicitly adopted the federal criteria for SLD.
- Important to refer to Guidelines for Identifying Students with Specific Learning Disabilities” (CDE, 2008a) for the complete eligibility process.

Ideas to Consider:
- Review & discuss the “Guidelines for Identifying Students with Specific Learning Disabilities” (CDE, 2008a).

The Law: Parents As Informed Partners in RtI and SLD Identification

Key Points:
- Requirements are unique to SLD identification.
- Developed to support the parents’ “meaningful involvement” in RtI process so can be part of decision-making and planning.
- Criteria support schools collecting, sharing, & reviewing data collaboratively with families.
- “Strategies for increasing the child’s rate of learning” will support coordinated learning between home and school by providing specific information to families.
Ideas to Consider:
- Plan how these requirements can be meaningfully integrated into the RtI problem-solving process.
- Specify what materials, resources & written information might be needed to enact these requirements.

Key Points:
- Comparisons highlight the shifts in beliefs and practices that are occurring because of the research, laws & their focus on educational outcomes for all students. The shift is summarized as being between traditional parental involvement and family partnering.
- Nothing “wrong” about traditional family involvement - has served many well & much of can & should continue in some forms.
- Our understanding & knowledge are growing & with it, an expanded view of how family-school-community partnering supports educational success.

Ideas to Consider:
- Discuss the shift with all stakeholders; create a “then and now” activity for a specific community, with the “now” being what is current practice &/or the goal for expanded partnering.

See other “shift” notes.
What is the Shift?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Parent Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When a student struggles, teachers tend to “go it alone”, then refer to child study group/special education if continuing problems; families “sign consent” and the special education team tests for eligibility.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Partnering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When a student struggles, families and teachers work together, then refer to the RtI problem-solving team if concerns continue; the team, including families and teachers, prescribes interventions and monitors progress.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See other “shift” notes.

Challenges and Solutions

“Hurdlers know there will be several obstacles...they plan ahead as to how to overcome. With a little foresight...there can be successful navigation”.

(Adapted from Ellis and Hughes, 2002)

Key Points:
- Despite 30 years research supporting benefits of schools and families working together, still difficult in many places.
- Real and significant challenges exist.
- Some schools develop strong systemic family-school relationships which are sustainable & intentional - they have identified barriers & overcome them.
- Quotation from “Partnerships by Design”, a well-developed family partnership planning tool.
- Implies that by identifying & planning for challenges, can successfully reach end goal, find solutions.

Ideas to consider:
- Check out Activities #5 & 6 in the module for formats to help you identify your own challenges in partnering. Then generate solutions. It is important to have data so you can “navigate” the hurdles.

Key Points:
- Statements: research summary examining why it’s difficult for families to partner with schools.
- Both educators & families express similar reasons
- Important to note that each school has own culture, as does each family.
- Fears of inadequacy & conflict on both sides.
- Teachers & administrators, except in rare instances & in early childhood, have little formal training working with families.
- Families, unless explicitly told, usually don’t have clear sense of their role - this can change from year to year, teacher to teacher & school to school.

Ideas to Consider:
- Compare your challenges to these. Are they the same or did you find some that were unique to your
specific situation?

Key Points:
Planning for hurdles: generating solutions & measuring effectiveness.
- Ideas above generated by workshop participants, professionals involved in field, & families.
- Important to look at challenges & target solutions accordingly.
- Often more than one solution needed for a challenge.
- Most suggestions require shift in thinking, time & resources - but not increases in budget or staff; use existing resources in new ways.

Ideas to Consider:
- What are the solutions you might have to your challenges? Discuss with various stakeholders in your school community.

Key Points:
- Section is about three tiers & how partnering can be thought of in 3 tiers.
- How to smartly & efficiently support all families & educators working together for student success.
- Each tier has specific roles, responsibilities, & resources - for families, educators, & community partners.
Key Points:
-Families, educators & community resources all want school success for their students.
-Each person, including student, has specific responsibility which is unique & special.
-Best possible outcome obtained when individuals & teams practice, respect each “player” & share goals.

Ideas to consider:
-Use this analogy to help staff, families, and students discuss their responsibilities, including ongoing communication around successes and concerns. Personalize with school teams or activities.

Key Points:
-Families, students, educators & community resources all have same mission & equal voices at table.
-Goal is positive outcomes for all.
-Focus is on student’s success.

Ideas to Consider:
-Discuss the school’s “tables”. Do all parties (including students, families & community resources) have a place? Who has a voice? How are differences resolved? What would an observer see? How many tables do you have?

Key Points:
-Family-school-community partnering in tiers aligns time & resources effectively; responsibilities & expertise can be utilized according to need.
-Each tier includes previous one, but provides additional support or focus.
-Partnering may be different across time or situation for any stakeholder as circumstances & expectations change.
-Universal Tier similar to core curriculum: more consistently & broadly implemented the more effective it will be.
-Can be applied to entire districts, communities, sites, classrooms, &/or special programs.
-Percentages used as guidelines in any setting in thinking through time & resources in each situation.
-Example: classroom of 30 students, 3 student/families may need targeted or intensive support
-Important to use data in making decisions.

Ideas to Consider:
-Discuss specific site tiers.

Key Points:
-Specific actions compose each tier; have research-base & are considered “best practices” in the literature--taken from Colorado’s RtI framework (CDE, 2008a, b).
-Document found in module toolkit as data collection tool which can be used in planning.
-Checklist could be used by district, school, team, department or individual to assess partnering practices.
-Community may want to develop own partnering tiers or add specific activities to these.

Ideas to Consider:
-Complete the checklist for a specific situation, setting.

Key Points:
-This is “core curriculum” of partnering. If school & staff are committed to these specific actions & implement them openly, hopefully 80-90% of families & staff will experience effective partnering relationships.
-Actions are specific & intended easily implemented
-Actions broken into “school” & “classroom” for clarity & role differentiation.
- Sample materials for Universal Tier in toolkit.

Ideas to Consider:
-Think about how these might work in your school and who could be responsible for what actions.
-Think about how family and community members might be involved in planning, reviewing communication, and helping with personally contacting all families.
-Check out Activity #7 on partnering in the module.
Key Points
-Actions for 5-15% of families, staff, and/or community resources who might need more support, time, intensity &/or outreach to support student’s school success.
-Just as in RtI framework, with more targeted use of resources, increased need for monitoring effectiveness of efforts.
-Also increased need more frequent communication & more sharing of information among partners.
-Targeted/Intensive Tiers include all actions from Universal Tier.
-Sample materials for Targeted/Intensive Tiers in toolkit

Ideas to Consider:
-Think about resource allocation and creative communication ideas that can work for all partners.
-Think about how you can support staff, families & community resources in sustaining this level of partnership.

Key Points:
-Partnering actions are individual, focused, time & resource intensive.
-For 1-5% of families, staff &/or community resources
-All parties aware of significant needs & work towards student success with appropriate mutual supports.
-Targeted comments also applied to intensive tier - often fluidity between two tiers based on current needs.

Key Points:
-Important to identify each stakeholder’s job description in universal family & school partnering.
-Most instances neither educators nor family members have clear understanding of roles, nor is it stated.
-Activity given below can be used to help school community clarify roles.
-Toolkit resource with sample roles found in the literature.

Ideas to Consider: Check Activity #8 in module.
Key Points:
- Sample universal tools help principals, teachers & other staff put intentional family-school partnering in place.
- Designed to be adaptable for various situations.

Ideas to Consider:
- It is helpful to know what the tools are like and how they might be useful to a specific community. Doing the Activity #9 in module might be suggested - independently or with a team or friend.

Key Points:
- In tiered partnering framework, students, families or teachers may need more support or focused opportunities to successfully support school success.
- Examples include: student at-risk in reading achievement, teacher unsure about how best to help a child having difficulty completing assignments, family suddenly homeless & unable to access school transportation, or difficulty communicating between home & school.
- Important to recognize sometimes need for more targeted or intensive support so that there is acceptance & access to appropriate resources.

Ideas to Consider:
- Think about your school community. How does a student, family, or teacher access additional opportunities in helping a student succeed?
RtI Problem-Solving Team and Process

When a student is struggling and needs targeted or intensive intervention to succeed, a team of family members, teachers, and specialists works to:

- Identify and prioritize concerns
- Develop shared measurable goals
- Plan prescriptive interventions
- Progress monitor
- Evaluate effectiveness
- Move students up and down tiers as needed
- Refer for possible special education consideration if insufficient progress

Key Points:
- Primary functions of RtI Problem-Solving Team & Process.
- Can be used as guide for teams to assess integrity of the process.
- All administrators, teachers, specialists, & families (including students when appropriate) should understand functions.
- Process guides & monitors interventions & ongoing communication occurring outside team meeting.
- Families are equal partners & are supported in coordinating/monitoring interventions with home learning.

Ideas to Consider:
- Use these functions as a “checklist” for problem-solving process integrity, incorporating specific school and team details.
- Review the module toolkit information on the problem-solving process for sample forms and information.

Key Points:
- Key roles on team, several roles may be fulfilled by one person.
- Families & students are full participating partners & are “themselves”.

Ideas to Consider:
- Add specific roles or have “job descriptions” for the people on your site’s team.
Key Points:
- Key responsibilities for families.
- Best practice to share family roles with all in advance of a problem-solving meeting so all can prepare and understand how to participate.

Ideas to Consider:
- Tailoring these to a specific site, with school process identified.

Key Points:
- RtI is more transparent process than other traditional systems.
- All stakeholders may be hesitant and unsure.
- Coaching, consulting, liaison-ing & linking are all roles for staff & family members who feel comfortable in roles.
- Support, guidance, information sharing & time are proactive strategies for creating positive working relationships.
- Smaller meetings, time for questions, follow-up & frequent communication efforts helpful.

Ideas to Consider:
- Have written information to share with all stakeholders.
- Have feedback venues such as satisfaction surveys, follow-up calls or suggestion boxes to visibly show interest in supporting successful partnering in RtI.

Key Points:
- Reaching out to families learning English can be challenging; also, trying to understand student’s cultural and linguistic needs.
- Helpful to have identified, valid process for mobilizing resources when a student learning English is struggling - or a family needs support.
- Communicating with family early in process, educators can build relationships & learn important information for prescribing interventions - thus early & prescriptive support.

Ideas to Consider:
- Check out the Sociocultural Interview/Interpreter Information tool in the Targeted/Intensive portion of the module toolkit. See if it might be helpful to your
school community.

-Discuss your process in reaching out to families learning English.

Key Points:
-Process referred to in Colorado Rules (and taken from the Federal Register: 2.08 (6) (b) (ii) (B) “The child does not make sufficient progress to meet age or state-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the areas identified in section 2.08(6)(b)(I) when using a PROCESS based on the child’s response to scientific, research-based intervention as determined by a body of evidence demonstrating: 2.08(6)(b)(ii)B(I) Academic skill deficit(s); and 2.08(6)(b)(ii)(B) (II) Insufficient progress in response to scientific, research-based intervention. This process is the “motor or elevator” that moves interventions up and down the tiers.
-Process occurs & should occur outside of actual meeting; Steps 1 and 2 addressed with teachers, family members & in collecting/analyzing existing data.
-Actual meetings are efficient & focused on data.
-Family “high-fiving” teacher is a symbol of the partnership in this process; all adults partnering for student success - family, general, special education & administration.
-Problem-solving process must be implemented consistently & with fidelity; process must be clear, transparent & defensible.
-Process is circular showing it is continuous & there is continual evaluation & adjustment according to responsiveness.
-Must be measurable goals & specific monitoring tools.
-Helpful, according to those working with process, to have trained staff, familiar in process & interventions.
Prescribing Interventions

- Interventions are prescribed based on data and resource availability.
- About research-based instructional practice or interventions:
  - are found to be reliable, trustworthy and valid based on evidence
  - ongoing documentation and analysis of student outcomes helps to define effective practice
  - in the absence of evidence, the instruction/intervention must be considered “best practices” based on available research and professional literature.

(CDE, 2008b)

Key Points:
- Full definition: A research-based instructional practice or intervention is: one found to be reliable, trustworthy, and valid based on evidence to suggest that when the program is used with a particular group of children, the children can be expected to make adequate gains in achievement. Ongoing documentation and analysis of student outcomes helps to define effective practice. In the absence of evidence, the instruction/intervention must be considered “best practices” based on available research and professional literature.
- NCLB cites “research-based” many times as a requirement for instruction. It is also a legally cited component of RtI.
- Many areas of instruction where research has not yet identified proven programs and methodology; in these situations, schools follow best instructional practices & evaluate effectiveness frequently to adjust instruction according to data.
- Schools must use interventions that are available & can be implemented with fidelity by personnel.
- Important to recognize many schools working on developing continuum of interventions, but reviewing, purchasing, & training demands resources over time.

Baselines (PLAAFP) and Goals

- What is the baseline, present level of academic achievement and functional performance, current status?
  - What is the number?
- What is OUR measurable goal, outcome, target?
  - Is the goal observable?
  - Is the goal measurable/quantifiable? Can it be counted?
  - Is the goal both ambitious and realistic?

Key Points:
- In RtI & problem-solving, essential that measurable goal, outcome or target is set & that this emerges from present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, or baseline.
- Measurability or numerical quality is mandated.
- New skill or way of thinking for teachers & families, important to explain & practice.
- Students respond well to clear, measurable goals - should be aware & included in process.
- Goals reasonable, ambitious, challenging, need to be attempted.
- Normed benchmarks & expectations important to consider if available - often are, but may not be readily apparent or used.
Monitoring Progress

- Progress monitoring is a research-based practice that regularly (weekly, biweekly, or monthly) measures students' academic or behavioral progress in order to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching practices and to make informed instructional decisions. Progress monitoring becomes more frequent with the intensity of the intervention. The same tool is used over time.

Key Points:
- Progress monitoring is monitoring progress!
- 2 key concepts are crucial to remember:
  1) Frequency of monitoring increases with intensity of the intervention; and
  2) The same tool must be used over time and be measuring the specific variable identified in the goal.
- Self-monitoring by students is an effective strategy
- Visual displays of progress-monitoring data help all stakeholders understand progress; leads to shared decision-making.
- In problem-solving process, families provided copies of progress-monitoring data.

Ideas to Consider:
- Discuss what and how progress-monitoring data are shared with families and students.

Decision Rules: What is a “Good” Response to Intervention?

- Positive Response
  - Gap is closing
  - Can extrapolate point at which target student(s) will “come in range” of target—even if this is long range
- Questionable Response
  - Rate at which gap is widening slows considerably, but gap is still widening
  - Gap stops widening but closure does not occur
- Poor Response
  - Gap continues to widen with no change in rate

Key Points:
- General guidelines for evaluating data in problem-solving process.
- Teams establish decision rules, but can be variable depending on goals, interventions & progress monitoring tools.
- Judgment involved.
- Visual data displays guide decision-making.

Ideas to Consider:
- Discuss the next slide & how decision rules are established.

Response to Intervention

- Graph depicts different kinds of responses to an intervention & how they might look when displayed visually in comparison with expected achievement.
Key Points:
-3 different responses to intervention can result in 3 different types of actions.
-Important to consider fidelity of implementation - “was the intervention carried out as planned?”.
-Usually some team judgment involved, depending on answer to that question & other circumstances.
-Data application & analyses skills are new for many educators, as well as families.
-When families are “on the team and at the table”, understanding of student learning will develop as process continues.
-Can be difficult when child continues to struggle; this issue must be addressed as appropriate with families & educators.

Ideas to Consider;
-How are issues of ongoing student struggles addressed?

Key Points:
-Visual data displays provide same information to all parties & makes information understandable to all parties.
-Visual data help students understand own learning.
-Important families & educators share common understanding of terms: baseline, target, aimline.
-Data then graphed in comparison to assess progress & response to intervention.

Ideas to Consider:
-There are numerous graphing programs and tools available, both online and in existing technology. How might families and students learn about these, as well as educators?
Assessing for Intervention

- Diagnostic and prescriptive assessments are individually administered. They are designed to gain more in-depth information and guide appropriate instruction or intervention plans. Assessments are given by trained/qualified personnel and focused on specific questions.

(This is not a formal special education eligibility process.)

Key Points:
- Important families, educators & community resources know that further diagnostic/prescriptive assessment can occur any time the team feels more information would be helpful in informing instruction.
- Families are part of decision-making & will better understand assessment purpose & meaning of results.
- Assessments not part of a formal special education eligibility process, but data may be used to consider referral and/or as part of body of evidence helping in decision-making regarding student.
- In Colorado, informed written consent is required for any assessment concerning behavior.
- For other assessment purposes, families should always be informed partners—they will be if team members.

Ideas to Consider:
- Considering how this process might be effectively integrated into a school’s RtI framework can help in efficiency, clarity for all team members - being proactive can save time and misunderstanding.
- Check out activity #10 on partnering in the module.

Sample Best Practices in RtI Problem-Solving: Educators, Families, Community Resources

- Classroom teachers and families work together to intervene when concerns first become apparent.
- Teachers and families jointly refer to problem-solving process when needed.
- Student strengths are shared.
- Families are given copies of referrals, intervention plans, progress-monitoring data.
- Student is involved when possible.

Materials: (1) "Space" for family input on referrals and intervention plans; (2) Advance written information to family, community resources; (3) Form or venue (phone, email) for family to share home information, ask questions before meetings.

Key Points:
- Compilation of identified best practices in literature & identified by CDE.
- Because RtI is new educational framework, people are learning what practices work best. These are guidelines to help.
- Schools have not necessarily included space for family input on referral forms & intervention plans in the past; in RtI partnering, this is easy & important. way to encourage teams & families to have important family information available for initial problem-solving discussions & ongoing communication. Forms help guide behavior.

Ideas to Consider:
- Review the complete “Best Practices” document in the RtI Problem-Solving Partner Packet. How do these work for you and your team, including educators, families, and community resources?
**Sample Questions For Educators, Families, and Community Resources To Ask About the RtI Problem Solving Process**

- Do we have all the information we need to prescribe an intervention, including that from the family?
- Are the family, any appropriate community resources “on the team” and “at the table”? Do they have RtI information? Are they getting copies of plans and data?
- Do we have a consistent progress monitoring tool?
- How will home and school learning be coordinated?
- How will we know if the intervention is being implemented as intended?
- How will we make a decision of whether to continue intervention, move to another tier, or consider possible referral?

*Thanks to the family advocates who helped generate these questions.*

**Key Points:**
- Questions originated from both RtI literature & family advocates; teams can collaboratively consider effectiveness.
- Just some of partial list; more questions in toolkit.
- Problem-solving process is new to many educators & parents, guiding questions help with transparency & genuine consideration of student’s progress.

**Ideas to Consider:**
- Use these questions as a “wrap-up” checklist for a team meeting to help in assessing process integrity.

**Referral for Special Education Evaluation**

- Please refer to Guidelines for Identifying Students with Specific Learning Disabilities (CDE, 2008a)

**Key Points:**
- Next slides present general conceptualization of possible referral to special education in RtI framework.
- The *Guidelines for Identifying Students with Specific Learning Disabilities* (CDE, 2008a) should be used by teams in making decisions.

**National Research Center for Learning Disabilities (NRCLD): Families and Special Education**


**Key Points:**
- Video clip, available at given link, describes family participation in RtI problem-solving process when decision to pursue special education eligibility made.
- Experienced educator & parent provides information.

**Ideas to Consider:**
- Show this clip to school staff and families as the problem-solving process is initiated for a student or give out for stakeholders to view on their own, with explanation.
- Discuss differences in how both families and staff might view special education referral through the RtI problem-solving vs. traditional process, based on this educator’s story.
**Key Points:**
- Next slides: sample of data problem-solving team, might review in deciding whether to refer for special education consideration.
- Three types of lines shown on graph are: student aimline based on current (baseline) and expected (measurable goal) levels or performance; peer average aimline for comparison; and actual charted progress for the student.

**Ideas to Consider:**
- Develop “real-life” samples for your school with various grades, academic or behavior areas, progress-monitoring tools; have an example to share with families.

---

**Key Points:**
- Chart illustrates an intervention that is not working (gap is not closing).
- Decision choices: more time, intensity or a different intervention.

---

**Key Points:**
- Simplified chart showing targeted intervention not resulting in progress & an intensive intervention resulting in sufficient progress (gap is closing); note the change in colors.
- Decision would probably be to continue with intervention.

---

**Key Points:**
- Simplified chart -- in practice, may have been more than two interventions implemented.
- Illustrates insufficient progress that may inform need for special education referral or ultimately, a determination of SLD (evidence of insufficient progress).
Special Education Referral Process
- Referral when a disability is suspected made by problem-solving team (including parent)
- Inform parent of intent to refer (if not involved in decision)
- Review existing data (with disability criteria)
- Obtain informed parental consent & provide procedural rights
- Develop evaluation plan with parent input
- Multidisciplinary team, including parents and classroom teachers, reviews data and criteria; decides whether eligibility criteria for a disability are met
- Refer to guidelines for identifying students with specific learning disorders (CLD, RLD)

Targeted/Intensive Tools

RTI Problem-Solving Partner Packet
- Referral/referral process
- Referral/referral process
- Referral/referral process
- Sample Problem-Solving Partner Packet
- Sample Problem-Solving Partner Packet
- Sample Problem-Solving Partner Packet
- Sample Problem-Solving Partner Packet
- Sample Problem-Solving Partner Packet

Sample Conjoint Interventions
- Targeted/Intensive Tools
- Targeted/Intensive Tools
- Targeted/Intensive Tools
- Targeted/Intensive Tools
- Targeted/Intensive Tools
- Targeted/Intensive Tools
- Targeted/Intensive Tools

Planning and Evaluation

“The Missing Piece of the Proficiency Puzzle: Involving Families and Communities in Improving Student Achievement” (Kentucky, 2007)

Terded Checklist, Surveys, FAQs, Challenges and Solutions, Terded Templates

Key Points:
- Summary of special education referral process in RtI framework.
- Families & classroom teachers are team members in eligibility decisions, representing a change from previous SLD aptitude-achievement discrepancy eligibility process, when decision was made by a team of specialists based on numerical data.

Ideas to Consider:
- Use these process points as a “check” for your team in referring a student for special education consideration.

Key Points:
- Sample targeted and intensive tools to help principals, teachers, & other staff put intentional family-school partnering in place; designed to be adaptable for various situations.

Ideas to Consider:
- It is helpful to know what the tools are like and how they might be useful to a specific community. Doing the Activity #11 in the module might be suggested - independently or with a team or friend.

Key Points:
- Data-based planning guides efficient & effective partnering practices.
- Important to know baseline/PLOP, target/goal, & how to progress monitor efforts—to use language of RtI.
- Planning should not be time-consuming or complicated; use KISS method - keep it small & simple. -Planning should not involve completing pages of documents to be put in files -should be active, living, breathing & integrated into existing structures, meetings.
- Always ask: “Where are we now?” “Where are we going?” “How are we getting there?” “How will we know we are there?”
- Quantity & quality of partnering efforts are both important.
- Data collection is necessary, not optional, but
Ideas to Consider:
- Who are leaders in this area? Who are family champions? Is there interest in partnering/ already actively engaged in being “on the team and at the table”? What are the existing meetings and structures?
- Check out Activity #12 on partnering in the module.

Key Points:
- All listed areas incorporate families, schools, & communities to some extent; important to link, apply partnering practices throughout a system.
- Can be on everyone’s agenda, so becomes component of the infrastructure.
- A tiered model, defined partnering job descriptions, & some joint training & discussion opportunities can help allocate resources & time within existing venues.

Ideas to Consider:
- Think about how all stakeholders can hear about RtI family & community partnering. Think about clear, consistent messages about expectations and responsibilities.

Key Points:
- Activity #15 in module can help planning how to incorporate families & communities into RtI framework.
- Planning has been designed to be easy, data-based & aligned with a tiered model.
Key Points:
-Specific actions which compose each tier; research-based & considered best practices in literature; taken from Colorado’s Rti framework (CDE, 2008a, b).
-Document found in toolkit is data collection tool which can be used in planning.
-Checklist could be used by district, school, team, department, or individual to assess partnering practices.
-Community may want to develop own partnering tiers or add specific activities to these.

Ideas for Consideration:
-Complete the checklist for a specific situation, setting.
-Check out Activity #13 on partnering in the module.

Key Points:
-3 surveys, feedback forms included in module to help school communities assess partnering status, each with different purpose.
-Sites may have other needs assessments or other tools which can be helpful in gaining information from educators and families.
-Activity #3 in module helps in becoming familiar with tools & assessing personal beliefs & practices; Rti uses data in making decisions for students; same should be true for designing practices to help in operationalizing partner process.

Key Points:
-Gathering data about stakeholders’ questions is helpful in identifying possible barriers & developing effective practices; frequently asked questions about Rti have been answered by CDE (2008a, 2008b).
-Questions from families, educators & community resources help guide practice & also shows respect for partners—to provide time to ask and discuss concerns proactively.
-Activity #14 in the module is designed to be easily implemented into an existing meeting structure.
Key Points:
- Generating challenges & solutions, both personally & systemically, is important in creating effective family-school partnerships; literature is clear regarding very real barriers to partnering & need to be identified & navigated.
- Gathering data will help decision-making & prioritizing time & resources.
- Open discussion of issues may be challenging, but is necessary; important data from stakeholders be used in discussions.

Key Points:
- Quotation highlights result of people from different perspectives, backgrounds, training & roles involving each other in common mission.
- Learning that comes with truly living an experience deeper & more lasting when involved vs. just being told or being shown.
- “Walking in another’s moccasins” another way to share message.
- Words imply teachers & families will understand more by collaborating in students’ education, each learning to understand.
- Proverb also chosen because of importance in teaching how to genuinely learn the culture of the school & culture of home.

Key Points:
- These are the works cited throughout the presentation slides.

References
References


Key Points:
- These are the works cited throughout the presentation slides.

References


Key Points:
- These are the works cited throughout the presentation slides.
Activities Slides with Notes
Key Points:
- Each activity has instructions for use and adaptation.

Key Points:
- 15 activities can be used within context of training, independently at existing meetings as forum for discussing partnering, or independently for self-study.

Activity #1: Define Partnering

**Materials:**
- Sheets with the Partnering Sentence Stem
- Writing Utensils

**Outcome:**
Participants engage in discussing personal and/or team definitions of partnering. Participants hear varying definitions and have an opportunity to collaborate on creating a mutually-shared definition.

**Instructions:**
(These can be varied to fit audiences.) Please write down a brief response to “Partnering is ___________________________”. Then discuss response with your team (or a neighbor). Create a team partnering definition or list the characteristics your team identified. Share key points with entire team.

---

**Activity #1:** Define Partnering

What is your definition of partnering?
Partnering is ___________________________.

Please share with your team.
group. Optional discussion points: would responses be different if all were educators or family members or community resources? Or any different group from the current one? What would students say? Or compare with given definition.

**Conclusion:** Individual, team or dyad keeps their responses to re-examine after a role-play activity or listening to other components of workshop or to take back to professional setting to share with others. “Partnering” can be applied to staff as well as families and communities.

Activity #2: Examining Your Own Attitudes and Assumptions

**Instructions:** This activity has three parts:  
A. Perceptions & Assumptions  
B. Labeling  
C. “Lead Others By Looking In Their Eyes”.  
Instructions for each are on the next three slides.

**Key Points:**  
-Don’t assume other people like or value the same things  
-Ask for information using open-ended questions.  
-Purpose of Activity: Power of messages and overcoming stereotypes.

A. Perceptions & Assumptions

**Materials:** Slide of Old Woman/Young Woman

**Instructions**  
Look at slide and share what you see.  
*Why do we include this under assumptions?  
*What do we learn from it?  
*Where do our perceptions come from?  
*What are parents’ assumptions about us?  
*What are educators’ assumptions about us?  
**Key points for Discussion:** self-awareness; recognize and examine existing assumptions; adopt new ones to create better relationships; what are parents’ assumptions about us?
B. Labeling

**Materials:** 5-7 pre-made labels stapled to scarf (examples: leader, joker, ignored, people pleaser, pessimist), person who doesn’t speak English, person with body piercings; 5-7 chairs in a circle

**Outcome:** Volunteers wearing the labels and the observers will become more aware of the following: how they approach or treat others based on stereotypes; think of others based on preconceived stereotypes. Participants will be more knowledgeable of the following: how to ask questions to find out who people really are, rather than basing behaviors on assumptions.

**Instructions:** *DON’T STATE PURPOSE UNTIL SUMMARIZING*

Move 5 chairs into a small circle in open area; ask for five volunteers; ask the rest of the group to stand around outside of the circle and observe without talking; put labels on the 5 volunteers.

**Role Play:** Tell volunteers that they have about five minutes to decide how to spend an extra $1,000 on family involvement activities that had not yet been allocated. They have to decide how to spend the money or it will be taken back. **Emphasize that no one should reveal labels.**
Treat others according to their label.
Volunteers (keep on your labels).

**Debrief:**
How did you feel?
How much progress did you make?
How were you treated?
What do you think your label is?
What happened?
How quickly did people act like their labels?
What kinds of labels do parents (or educators) put on you?
How does labeling impact interactions with families we work with?
How can stereotyping be avoided? Useful to help us organize, but then we make assumptions which can
create problems.

**Conclusion:** The five-seven volunteers wearing labels must try to come up with ways to spend money while treating people according to the label they were given. After 5 minutes of discussion, the task has not been accomplished. The volunteers eventually stop focusing on the task at hand because their feelings become so overwhelming that they begin to shut down and stop participating. After the volunteers have stopped the role play, the debriefing time is very critical for both volunteers to vent their feelings and for observers to recognize their own stereotypes and discuss ways to prevent ourselves from acting on assumptions, but rather communicate to find out accurate information about other things. This activity can be used with a variety of groups that are interested in understanding how our perceptions and stereotyping affects behavior and others’ inner core. This activity can be used as part of diversity training, problem-solving and conflict resolution training, personal growth training.

**C. Lead Others by Looking in Their Eyes**

**Instructions:** Ask the participants to close their eyes and enjoy listening to the following story which illustrates how each of us has different perceptions of the same events:

After World War II, a general and his young lieutenant boarded a train in England. The only seats left were across from a young woman and her grandmother. The general and the lieutenant sat facing the women. As the train pulled out, it went through a long tunnel. For about ten seconds there was total darkness. In the silence of the moment those on the train heard two things- a kiss and a slap. Everyone on the train had his or her own perception of what happened. The **young woman** thought to herself, I am flattered that the lieutenant kissed me, but I am terribly embarrassed that Grandmother hit him!

The **grandmother** thought, I am aggravated that the young man kissed my granddaughter, but I am proud that she had the courage to retaliate!
The general sat there, thinking to himself, my lieutenant showed a lot of guts in kissing that woman, but why did she slap me by mistake?

The lieutenant was the only one on the train who really knew what happened. In that brief moment of darkness he had the opportunity to kiss a pretty woman and slap his general.

Discuss the pros and cons of making assumptions about other’s perceptions. The key points are as follows: assumptions can be harmful or beneficial depending on the people involved; don’t make expectations from assumptions, but use them as a guide; sometimes people have the same value but it has a different meaning i.e. respect, education.

Activity #3: Complete a Survey

Materials: Copies of Each Survey (enough for each person on team or at table to have a different one);
Writing Utensils

Outcome: Participants will choose one of three tools to familiarize themselves with the instrument and assess either their school/district’s partnering status OR their personal beliefs, practices, and experiences. Then, after taking the survey, teams will discuss the different tools and potential uses.

Instructions: (Variation can be all participants taking one survey, chosen in advance for a specific purpose; or all participants take all surveys). Please choose one of the four family-community partnering tools and complete it. It is helpful if people at your table each choose a separate survey so you can share your impressions of each. Then discuss personal impressions of the survey, including strengths and weaknesses, and how they might use it in their setting. {Note that all of these tools can be used by families, educators, and community resources.}

Conclusion: Participants can revisit the surveys as they plan partnering/training implementation at their sites.
Activity #4: Family-School Partnering Continuum

**Materials:** Long Sheets of Paper with Continuum on Walls, Sticky Dots OR Individual Copies of Continuum for Participants or Teams; Writing Utensils

**Outcome:** Participants will rank their sites and themselves as to their beliefs about family-school partnering. These numbers can be a baseline for future rankings. This exercise can be also used as a “progress-monitoring” tool for assessing progress in a partnering initiative and/or used to compare different stakeholder groups so as to plan future activities.

**Instructions:** (This activity can be completed in several ways.) 1) Using a wall chart, take red dot and place where you feel YOU are on this continuum on the wall chart. Then take a green dot and place where you feel your school staff (or families) might be on the continuum; or 2) Using the sheet above, give yourself a number and then your school community; or 3) Give yourself a number and then give a number to where you think families might be at your site. Discuss and compare responses.

**Conclusion:** This is a quick, easy activity to share with others and to generate discussion. Other endpoints could be identified to more specifically address relevant school issues.

Activity #5 Answer: What are Your Challenges?

**Materials:** Copies of Challenges/Solutions Chart for Each Participant and One for Table; Writing Utensils

**Outcome:** Participants will identify their biggest challenges for educators and families in implementing partnering throughout their school community. Prioritizing them helps in planning for future work.

**Instructions:** Please take a minute and write down what you think are your “Big 3” challenges for each of educators and families. Then share with team and prioritize for your site with numbers 1, 2, and 3. Then
we will compare yours with the research (see next slide).

**Conclusion:** The prioritized challenges can guide initiative planning such as deciding on training needs, shifts in staff time, accessing family cultural liaisons.

Key Points:
- These identified challenges, or hurdles, are a summary from the literature.
- They demonstrate that challenges are similar for both families and educators.
- Each can be addressed by discussing and problem-solving.

**Ideas for Consideration:**
If using as a component of Activity #5, discuss how individual or team’s list compares to these.

**Activity #6 Answer: What are Your Solutions?**

**Materials:** Copies of Challenges/Solutions Chart for Each Participant and One for Table; Writing Utensils

**Outcome:** Participants will generate possible solutions to their previously identified challenges. This component will hopefully result in some brainstorming, “out-of-the-box” thinking about shifting time, resources, and people “at the table”.

**Instructions:** Please take a minute and generate possible solutions for your challenges with your team. It is helpful to think of at least two solutions for each prioritized challenge. Check out the “Thinking About Solutions” ideas in next slide.

**Conclusion:** Teams can keep these brainstorming results to use in future planning and work. They can assess ideas for realistic implementation.
Key Points:
- Planning for hurdles involves generating solutions & measuring effectiveness.
- The ideas above have been generated by workshop participants, professionals involved in the field & families.
- It is important to look at your challenges and target solutions accordingly.
- Often more than one solution is needed for a challenge.
- Most of the suggestions require a shift in thinking, time, & resources—but not increases in budget or staff. They are using existing resources in new ways.

Ideas to Consider:
- What are the solutions you might have to your challenges?
- Discuss with various stakeholders in your community.

Activity #7  View Universal Partnering: The O’Hearn School

Materials: Patrick O’Hearn School Video available at http://fsp.unl.edu/future_module1_video1.html

Outcome: Participants will have the opportunity to view and discuss the Patrick O’Hearn’s School’s family partnership program, which is a planned, intentional, system-wide initiative. The teachers, families, and principal all teamed in the intervention.

Instructions: Please watch the scenario and discuss your impressions with your team, using the above guiding questions.

Conclusion: Participants may want to discuss their thoughts, impressions with others at their sites. Although the O’Hearn School is an elementary school, the systemic partnership planning with all stakeholders can occur in any system.
Activity #8 Define Partnering Job Descriptions

**Materials:** Chart Paper for Each Job Description; Copies of Sample Job Descriptions; Blank Paper; Writing Utensils

**Outcome:** Participants will have the opportunity to create family-school-community partnering job descriptions for various school staff roles and families, community resources. Then there can be a comparison with what currently exists in their sites and future thinking about what might be helpful to define into explicit expectations.

**Instructions:** Please take a few minutes to walk around the room and add your thoughts to the charts on the wall for each of the above roles (or sit at your table and write down ideas for the roles on a sheet of paper). It is not necessary to write on each, but please do so on the ones you feel are most relevant to your position and/or you feel you have the strongest ideas about their possible responsibilities. Then return to your seat and review the samples at your table and compare your thoughts. The group ideas will then be shared from the charts with all participants’ input (or individuals can discuss the job descriptions from sheets at table). Sample job descriptions from the module toolkit can be used for ideas or in discussions.

**Conclusion:** Participants will have ideas to share about partnering roles and responsibilities. Many may already have specifically defined partnering as part of performance appraisal procedures, supervision, professional learning communities and these practices can be shared with others.
Activity #9 Review Universal Tools

**Materials:** One Set of Universal Sample Tools From Toolkit

**Outcome:** Participants will become familiar with the Universal Tools so as to know which might be appropriate or adaptable for their situations.

**Instructions:** Please choose two - three resources to read, review and then summarize/evaluate for your team or table. As you do so, please share whether or not you feel the item may or may not be helpful to your site and if helpful, how it might be used. At each table, try and divide up the resources so all are reviewed.

**Conclusion:** Participants will have some ideas of how they may want to support family-school-community partnering in their settings. Each may want to mark potentially useful documents.

Activity #10 View Problem-Solving Process Video

**Materials:** CDE Problem-Solving Video

**Outcome:** Participants will have the opportunity to view and discuss the problem-solving process enacted by a school team partnering with a family member around a behavior and/or academic challenge observed at home and school. {Note: There are two problem-solving scenarios.}

**Instructions:** Please watch the scenario and discuss your impressions with your team, using the above guiding questions.

**Conclusion:** Participants may want to discuss their thoughts, impressions with problem-solving team members at their sites. Using the scenarios to prepare staff and families for participation may be helpful. They may want to consult the problem-solving materials on the CDE RtI website at http://www.cde.state.co.us/rti/ProblemSolving.htm
Activity #11 Review Targeted/Universal Tools

**Materials:** One Set of Targeted/Intensive Sample Tools

**Outcome:** Participants will become familiar with the Targeted/Intensive Tools so as to know which might be appropriate or adaptable for their situations.

**Instructions:** Please choose two - three resources to read, review and then summarize/evaluate for your team or table. As you do so, please share whether or not you feel the item may or may not be helpful to your site and if helpful, how they might be used. At each table, try and divide up the resources so all are reviewed.

**Conclusion:** Participants will have some ideas of how they may want to support family-school-community partnering in their settings. Each may want to mark potentially useful documents.

Activity #12 Reflect on RtI Partnering

**Materials:** Pictures and Sentence Stem Sheet for Each Participant; Writing Utensils.

**Outcome:** Participants will have the opportunity to describe what it is like to think about family and community partnering in an RtI model.

**Instructions:** Please take a minute and fill in the blanks with what picture best describes what family-school-community partnering is like for you and why. Then share with a neighbor.

**Conclusion:** This exercise can be a quick activity for already existing meetings such as PTAs, accountability committees, faculty. Any sentence stem or pictures can be substituted. It can also be a discussion starter for students around schools and families partnering.
Activity #13 Complete Tiered Checklist

**Materials:** Tiered RtI Partnering Checklist for Each Participant; Writing Utensils

**Outcome:** Participants will assess their situation for tiered partnering components. They can also revise or personalize the checklist to fit their situation.

**Instructions:** Please review tiered RtI partnering checklist and mark what you and/or your site have currently in place. Add ideas or revise if you like. Then share your findings with a colleague and discuss relevance, applicability, and other applications for site.

**Conclusion:** This checklist was developed from CDE RtI guidelines and family-school-community partnering theory and research. It can be used as a baseline in strategic planning, goal-setting and for time/resource allocation. Systems may want to separate tiers and/or revise for specific needs such as high school departments or family communication.

Activity #14 Ask and Answer: FAQs

**Materials:** Sample FAQs from “Planning and Evaluation Tools/Resources”; Writing Utensils

**Outcome:** Participants will have the opportunity to generate possible questions from various facets of the school community & think about how to answer with action-based responses.

**Instructions:** Please generate possible questions you &/or your communities might have about RTI family-school partnering? Write on FAQ sheet. Then consider various action-based responses that might help in implementation of partnering practices. Compare your questions, responses with the samples given on the FAQ sheet.

**Conclusion:** Predicting possible questions and developing possible answers helps in strategic planning and identification of challenges. Asking school community members (staff, families,
community resources) to submit questions on all “two-way” communication venues will help identify sources of confusion, frustration, resistance, or information needs.

Activity # 15 Plan and Evaluate Your Partnering Tiers

**Materials:** RtI Family & Community Partner Plan Templates for Universal and Targeted/Intensive; Completed Tiered Checklists, FAQs, Surveys (or if haven’t completed during training - blank samples), Challenges and Solutions; Sample Completed Templates

**Outcome:** Participants will plan how to support their school communities in implementing RtI family and community partnering, including what data and resources they might need. Planning can focus on the district or building or department or a specific stakeholder group - depending on what is the prioritized need.

**Instructions:** This activity is designed to give you a “gift of time” - to spend a few minutes discussing your situation, current status, priorities, data, and next steps in planning for tiered RtI family and community partnering. Please review the following tools to discern if and how they may be helpful to you: Tiered Checklist, School Partnering Survey (Davis et al.), RtI Partnering Survey and Needs Assessment, Planning Team Feedback, FAQs, Challenges and Solutions, Sample Completed Templates. Then review the Tiered Templates and complete a draft that might guide your implementation and practice.

**Conclusion:** This activity is intended to help teams and/or individuals think about next steps in an easy, efficient way - for assessing current status and identifying future outcomes in RtI family and community partnering. Stakeholders may want to incorporate their thinking into already existing committees, plans, and/or structures in their school communities such as accountability, PBS, leadership, professional learning communities, PTA/PTOs.
Sample Stakeholder Back-to-School Presentation Slides and Notes
The following slides are samples, utilizing information from the Colorado Department of Education. It is suggested that a presentation be developed which can be shared with all stakeholders about RtI. It would also be available to families and communities if they become involved in the problem-solving process with their student.

Key Points:
- The more families, educators, & community resources have the same information about RtI, the more efficient and effective the process.
- Students will access early intervention from all the adults in their lives if they are struggling in academic or behavior arenas.

Ideas to Consider:
- Gather a team of educators, family & community representatives to work together in RtI planning.
- Ask family representatives to preview all written communication for clarity and family friendly language.

Key Points:
This slide is for the site’s message.
**RtI Defined**

Response to Intervention is an approach that promotes a well-integrated system connecting general, compensatory, gifted, and special education in providing high quality, standards-based instruction & intervention that is matched to students' academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs. A continuum of evidence-based, tiered interventions with increasing levels of intensity and duration is central to RtI. Collaborative educational decisions are based on data derived from frequent monitoring of student performance and rate of learning. (CDE, 2008b)

**RtI in Colorado**

The overarching purpose of RtI implementation is to improve educational outcomes for all students. Core Colorado RtI Principles

We Believe...

- All children can learn and achieve high standards as a result of effective teaching.
- All students must have access to a rigorous, standards-based curriculum and research-based instruction.
- Intervening at the earliest indication of need is necessary for student success (Pre-K-12).
- A comprehensive system of tiered interventions is essential for addressing the full range of student needs.
- Student results are improved when ongoing academic and behavioral performance data are used to inform instructional decisions. (CDE, 2008b)

Key Points:
- Hands are symbol of partnership & collaboration for student success.
- RtI is about all students, families, & parts of education.
- RtI is a school-wide framework to increase student achievement.
- Every school in the state will implement RtI by August 2009; it is one of the criteria in the law as a requirement for the identification of Specific Learning Disabilities.

Ideas to Consider:
- Refer to Colorado RtI website for more information.

Key Points:
- Core principles were developed by state-wide task force on RtI.

Ideas to Consider:
- Discuss how these relate to your site, situation. Would you add or change any?

Key Points:
- Highlighted principles relate specifically to families, schools & communities partnering for student success.
Six Essential Components of Colorado RtI
- Leadership
- Curriculum & Instruction
- Problem-Solving Process
- Progress Monitoring
- School Culture & Climate
- Family and Community Engagement

Key Points:
- Six components were established by the RtI Task Force.
- Each component is important to implementing RtI.

Ideas to Consider:
- How would each of these areas be defined in your site?
- How are they a component of your RtI framework?

Colorado RtI Sample Slides CDE 6/09

Key Points:
- RtI is a multi-tiered model.
- Read tier descriptions & percentages.
- In Colorado, tiers represent both behavior & academic learning.
- Students move up & down tiers as needed for learning.
- Progress monitoring data drives this process.
- As students move up tiers, provide more intense & specialized instruction.
- Problem-solving process is the circle in the middle, interventions prescribed & monitored by team.
- “Families and communities” surround the triangle.

Ideas to Consider:
- Does your site and/or district have a multi-tiered model for student interventions?
- If so, what are some of the specific components?

Colorado RtI Video

Key Points:
- Video was made by CDE highlighting core principles & essential components.
- Principals, teachers, families & students share their thoughts.
- Video is overview & appropriate for all stakeholders.

Ideas to Consider:
- A school or district may want to add clips from individual site, relating to specific RtI components seen locally.
School Specifics

- {Universal tier operations, standard prescribed interventions, teacher and family communication, problem-solving team name and process...}

Key Points:
- It is helpful for all stakeholders to understand school’s universal screening & instructional processes - such as grouping, scheduling, literacy & math blocks etc. Informing families how they will know about concerns &/or successes is helpful so they can support learning at home.

RtI Problem-Solving Team and Process

- When a student is struggling and needs targeted or intensive intervention to succeed, a team of family members, teachers, and specialists works to:
  - Identify and prioritise concerns
  - Develop shared measurable goals
  - Plan prescriptive interventions
  - Progress monitor
  - Evaluate effectiveness
  - Move students up and down tiers as needed
  - Refer for possible special education consideration if insufficient progress

Key Points:
- These are the primary functions of RtI Problem-Solving Team & Process.
- These can be used as guide for teams to assess integrity of the process.
- All administrators, teachers, specialists, & families (including students when appropriate) should understand functions.
- The process guides & monitors interventions & ongoing communication occurring outside team meeting.
- Families are equal partners & are supported in coordinating/monitoring interventions with home learning.

Ideas to Consider:
- Use these functions as a “checklist” for problem-solving process integrity, incorporating specific school and team details.
- Review the module toolkit information on the problem-solving process for sample forms and information.
- Review and discuss the CDE materials on problem-solving in the following documents: Guidelines for identifying students with Specific Learning Disabilities (CDE, 2008a); Response to Intervention (RtI): A Practitioner’s guide to Implementation (CDE, 2008b); and Problem-solving/Consultation Process: Training Video Guide (CDE, 2009).
Key Points:
- Process referred to in Colorado Rules (and taken from the Federal Register: 2.08 (6) (b) (ii) (B) “The child does not make sufficient progress to meet age or state-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the areas identified in section 2.08(6)(b)(I) when using a PROCESS based on the child’s response to scientific, research-based intervention as determined by a body of evidence demonstrating:

  2.08(6)(b)(ii)(B)(I) Academic skill deficit(s); and

  2.08(6)(b)(ii)(B)(II) Insufficient progress in response to scientific, research-based intervention.

- This process is the “motor or elevator” that moves interventions up and down the tiers.
- Process occurs & should occur outside of actual meeting; Steps 1 and 2 addressed with teachers, family members & in collecting/analyzing existing data.
- Actual meetings are efficient & focused on data.
- Family “high-fiving” teacher is a symbol of the partnership in this process; all adults are partnering for student success - family, general, special education & administration.
- Problem-solving process must be implemented consistently & with fidelity; process must be clear, transparent & defensible.
- Process is circular showing it is continuous & there is continual evaluation & adjustment according to responsiveness.
- Must be measurable goals & specific monitoring tools.
- Helpful, according to those working with process, to have trained staff, familiar in process & interventions.
Roles on Problem-Solving Team
- Facilitator
- Recorder
- Case Manager/Designated Consultant/Coach
- Interventionist
- Progress Monitoring/Data Specialist
- Family Member
- Student (if appropriate)

Key Points:
- These are key roles on team, several roles may be fulfilled by one person.
- Families and students are full participating partners and are “themselves”.

Ideas to Consider:
- Add specific roles or have “job descriptions” for the people on your site’s team.

Family Role in Problem-Solving Process
- Collaborate & communicate with teachers about student.
- Share information about child and family as appropriate.
- Support student learning at home.
- Attend problem-solving team meeting, if possible. If attending isn’t possible, it is important to communicate before and after a meeting. Partner in intervention planning and monitoring.
- Participate in decisions for any assessment and/or referral for special education evaluation.

Key Points:
- Key responsibilities for families should be shared.
- Best practice is to share family roles with all in advance of a problem-solving meeting so all can prepare and understand how to participate.

Ideas to Consider:
- Tailoring these to a specific site, with school process identified.

Prescribing Interventions
- Interventions are prescribed based on data and resource availability.
- About research-based instructional practice or interventions:
  - are found to be reliable, trustworthy, and valid based on evidence
  - ongoing documentation and analysis of student outcomes helps to define effective practice
  - in the absence of evidence, the instruction/intervention must be considered “best practices” based on available research and professional literature.

Key Points:
- Full definition: A research-based instructional practice or intervention is: one found to be reliable, trustworthy, and valid based on evidence to suggest that when the program is used with a particular group of children, the children can be expected to make adequate gains in achievement. Ongoing documentation and analysis of student outcomes helps to define effective practice. In the absence of evidence, the instruction/intervention must be considered “best practices” based on available research and professional literature.
- NCLB cites “research-based” many times as a requirement for instruction. It is also a legally cited component of RtI.
- There are many areas of instruction where research has not yet identified proven programs and methodology; in these situations, schools follow best instructional practices & evaluate effectiveness frequently to adjust instruction according to data.
- Schools must use interventions that are available & can be implemented with fidelity by personnel.
- Important to recognize many schools are working
on developing continuum of interventions, but reviewing, purchasing, & training demands resources over time

Key Points:
- In RtI & problem-solving, it is essential that there is a measurable goal, outcome or target set and that this emerges from present level of performance, or baseline.
- Measurability or numerical quality is mandated.
- New skill or way of thinking for teachers & families, is important to explain and practice.
- Students respond well to clear, measurable goals – they should be aware and included in process.
- Goals should be reasonable, ambitious, challenging; they need to be attempted.
- Normed benchmarks & expectations are important to consider if available - often are, but may not be readily apparent or used.

Key Points:
- Progress monitoring is monitoring progress!
- 2 key concepts are crucial to remember:
  1) Frequency of monitoring increases with intensity of the intervention;
  2) The same tool must be used over time and be measuring the specific variable identified in the goal.
- Self-monitoring by students is an effective strategy.
- Visual displays of progress-monitoring data help all stakeholders understand progress; leads to shared decision-making.
- In problem-solving process, families are provided copies of progress-monitoring data.

Ideas to Consider:
- Discuss what and how progress-monitoring data are shared with families and students.
Families, Students and Educators are "On the Team"
On a football team, every player has a job to do and a role to play. Each player is respected for his/her unique expertise. Each player practices and works to become better at executing personal responsibilities. The team works together to obtain the best results possible.

Key Points:
- Families, educators & community resources all want school success for their students.
- Each person, including student, has specific responsibility which is unique & special.
- Best possible outcome is obtained when individuals & teams practice, respect each “player” and share goals.

Ideas to consider:
- Use this analogy to help staff, families, and students discuss their responsibilities, including ongoing communication around successes and concerns; personalize with school teams or activities.

Families, Students, and Educators are "At the Table"
Picture a table where people are discussing a topic.
- Respecting and listening
- Understanding different perspectives
- Focusing on positive outcomes
- Disagreeing at times
- Intentionally working to compromise
Each involved party has a place “at the table”, even if he/she can’t attend. All voices are heard.

Key Points:
- Families, students, educators and community resources all have same mission and equal voices at table.
- Goal is positive outcomes for all.
- Focus is on student’s success.

Ideas for Consideration:
- Discuss the school’s “tables”. Do all parties (including students, families & community resources) have a place? Who has a voice? How are differences resolved? What would an observer see? How many tables do you have?

“…No matter how skilled professionals are, nor how loving families are, each cannot achieve alone, what the parties, working hand-in-hand, can accomplish together.”

Key Points:
- Quote stresses importance of working together.
- Another quote: “Caring for the children we share”.

Ideas to Consider:
- Refer to RtI Family & Community Engagement module for other quotations to help in partnership communications.
- Quotations are often repeated in communication & publications.
- Develop a unique, site-specific meaningful quotation.
For More Information…

Please contact (your child’s teacher, administrator…) for more information about our Response-to-Intervention (RtI) framework if you have concerns about your student.

Key Points
- RtI is a transparent, collaborative process.
- Stakeholders, including school staff, all need to be aware of process and how questions, concerns will be addressed.
- RtI is new framework & everyone is learning.

Ideas to Consider
- Hand out a brochure with RtI information.
- Refer to district or state information as appropriate.
II. Universal Tier: Tools and Resources

- School
- Classroom
School

- Sample Principal Home Letter/Newsletter Article
- Sample Principal Community Letter
- Colorado RtI Stakeholder Brochure (English)
- Colorado RtI Stakeholder Brochure (Spanish)
- Sample Reminder Cards (English)
- Sample Reminder Cards (Spanish)
- Sample RtI Partnering Job Descriptions
- Sample Parent Agreement (Policy) Compact: Title I, Part A, ESEA
- Six Types of Involvement in Family-School-Community Partnership: English and Spanish
- Partnering Vocabulary
- Partnering Stories From the Field
- Secondary Schools’ Fact Sheet
Sample Principal Home Letter/School Newsletter Article

August 2009

Welcome back to school! We are looking forward to a year of learning and partnership. We are committed to helping every student succeed in school. Specifically, I want to share some important focus areas we will be addressing in the upcoming months. We want to clearly communicate our beliefs about partnering with families. We would like to share some of our ideas and invite your input on this important topic.

At [school], we believe it is important for families and schools to work together and share responsibility for student success. We very much value family members’ expertise about their children. Families know a student best and we can learn from you. Also, we want our students to know the importance of schools and families together supporting their work at school. As part of this goal, we have developed {or worked with some families in the community to create school’s process} some two-way communication tools and shared activities. You will be hearing more about these in the next few weeks. They are: {include school specific activities; below are examples}

- Classroom two-way communication tools {these vary by teacher and grade/department} so that you and your student’s teacher(s) can share successes and concerns in an ongoing manner. This allows for early intervention if your student is struggling.
- School expectations for homework, behavior and learning communicated to you by your student. We want students to know and understand that we are working with you to help them succeed.
- Different learning opportunities for families and staff on various topics throughout the year. Some of these opportunities will be at school and others at various places in our community.
- A “Suggestion Box” in the front office and at a link on our website. Please share your thoughts with us frequently; if you leave us your name and contact information, we will personally respond.

In addition, we are implementing a process this year, Response to Intervention (RtI), which provides a continuum of support for students who may be struggling in academic or behavioral areas. RtI focuses on addressing concerns when they first begin in the classroom, so that learning support can be implemented in a timely manner. In RtI, families and teachers team together in intervention planning, monitoring, and decision-making as to needed student support. If you have concerns about your student, please share those with the classroom teacher so you can together discuss intervention planning for home and school. Similarly, your student’s teacher(s) will be working with you if he/she sees your child struggling. If you would like more information about the
RtI process, there is information on our website (insert URL here) or in the front/counseling office. You may also contact your student’s teacher(s) or _______________ at _____ (phone, email) for more information about Response to Intervention at ______(school) ______.

We welcome you to the ___(year)__ school year at _____(school)__. We hope to see and hear from you often.

Sincerely,

Principal
Staff (List of names, grades etc. - if possible)
Sample Principal Community Letter

August 2009

Dear ____ (school) ____ Community Resources,

At ____ (school) _____, we believe it is important for families, community resources and schools to work together in supporting student success. We value family and community partnering for all students. We want our students to know the importance of schools, families and community members together supporting their work at school. We are implementing a process this year, Response to Intervention (RtI), which involves different tiers of support being available to students who may be struggling in academic or behavioral areas. RtI focuses on addressing concerns when they first begin in the classroom, so that possible interventions can be implemented in a timely manner. In RtI, families, teachers, and appropriate community resources team together in intervention planning, monitoring, and decision-making.

This year, we have made a goal to develop meaningful partnerships with families and the community resources who work with them. You may be hearing specific information from students and families, as it relates to their participation in RtI. We also wanted you to have some specific knowledge about our school’s partnering efforts and our RtI process. We are including a packet of information which describes this framework. This packet includes the following: {include school information on its RtI process – examples given below}

- RtI Brochure, Insert
- Sample Family Invitation and Home Information Form
- Sample Problem-Solving Process Referral
- Information on different learning opportunities for families, schools staff and community resources on various topics throughout the year: you are invited to join us in any of these sessions
- Copy of our newsletter with RtI and partnering information

We look forward to partnering with you this year. You may be receiving information about a specific student and family who is involved in the RtI process. Please contact us with comments or questions at any time. _____(Name) _______ at ___ (School) ______ is our building RtI Coordinator.

Sincerely,

Principal
The overarching purpose of RtI implementation is to improve educational outcomes for all students.

**RtI Defined**

*Response to Intervention* is an approach that promotes a well-integrated system connecting general, compensatory, gifted, and special education in providing high quality, standards-based instruction and intervention that is matched to students’ academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs.

---

**What should you do if you have concerns about your child’s academic or behavioral progress?**

- Notify your child’s teacher, counselor or case manager and ask for a problem-solving team meeting.*

- Gather home information related to your child’s specific strengths, homework samples, attitude about school, test scores, previous school experiences, peer relationships, and challenges.

- Participate in problem-solving discussions with the school staff about your child’s specific strengths and needs.

- Develop interventions with school staff and monitor your child’s progress towards meeting specific, measurable goals.

*Note: School problem-solving teams may have various titles.

---

**Stakeholder Brochure:**

*Parents, Community, Teachers, Service Providers*

---

**Response to Intervention:**

*A Framework for Educational Reform*

---

**Colorado Department of Education**

For more information contact your school or go online to: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/rti/](http://www.cde.state.co.us/rti/)
CORE RtI Principles

Developed by Colorado RtI Task Force and Implementation Team composed of parents and educators

We believe that...

- All students can learn and achieve high standards as a result of effective teaching.
- All students must have access to a rigorous, standards-based curriculum and research-based instruction.
- Intervening at the earliest indication of need is necessary for student success (Pre K-12).
- A comprehensive system of tiered intervention is essential for addressing the full range of needs.
- Student results improve when ongoing academic and behavioral performance data are used to inform instructional decisions.
- Collaboration among educators, families and community members is the foundation to effective problem-solving and instructional decision-making.
- Ongoing and meaningful involvement of families increases student success.
- All members of the school community must continue to gain knowledge and develop expertise in order to build capacity and sustainability.
- Effective leadership at all levels is crucial for the implementation of RtI.

The RTI Problem-Solving Team Process

- Define Problem, Directly Measure Behavior
- Analyze the Problem, Validate the Problem, Identify Variables
- Develop Plan, Implement Plan as Intended, Progress Monitor, Modify as Necessary
- Evaluate Response to Intervention

Essential RtI Vocabulary

Family-School Partnerships: Families and staff partnering in the RtI process, including designing interventions for school and home.

Problem-Solving Team: A collaborative team (which includes parents, general and special educators) that meets to evaluate student data, and plan and monitor prescribed interventions.

Multi-Tiered Intervention Model: Providing different levels of instruction (universal, targeted, intensive) based upon student response to intervention.

Data-Driven Decision Making: The process of planning for student success (both academic and behavioral) through the use of ongoing progress monitoring and analysis of data.

Focused Assessment: Formal and informal assessment targeted to specifically plan program service delivery and/or appropriate interventions for student success.

Problem-Solving Process: A collaborative team process based on the multi-tiered model which includes prescribing, monitoring, and evaluating interventions based on data.

Progress Monitoring: Collecting and analyzing data about student progress to make instructional decisions.
¿Qué debe hacer Ud. si le preocupa el progreso académico o del comportamiento de su hijo/a?

✓ Notifique al/la maestro/a, consejero/a, o al encargado del caso y solicite una reunión con el equipo de resolución de problemas.*

✓ Junte información del hogar relacionado con las facultades específicas de su hijo/a, muestras de sus tareas, actitud sobre la escuela, calificaciones de los exámenes, experiencia en previas escuelas, relación con la gente de su entorno y sus desafíos.

✓ Participe en discusiones de resolución de problemas con el personal de la escuela sobre las fortalezas y necesidades específicas de su hijo.

✓ Desarrolle programas con el personal de la escuela y vigile el progreso de su hijo/a en para alcanzar metas específicas y apreciables.

El propósito de aplicar implementación de programas de intervención -RtI- es mejorar el resultado educacional de todos los estudiantes.

DEFINICION DE RTI

Respuesta a la Intervención es un programa que provee instrucción e intervención de alta calidad que se adapta a las necesidades académicas, sociales, emocionales y de comportamiento del estudiante y este es un sistema bien integrado que conecta la educación general, compensatoria, dotada y educación especial.

* Nota: Los equipos resolución de problemas pueden tener diferentes títulos.

Respuesta a la Intervención: Una estructura para una Reforma Educativa
Reglas Principales de RtI
Desarrollado por el Equipo de Trabajo de RtI y el Equipo de implementación compuesto por padres y educadores de Colorado.

Nosotros creemos que....

- Todos los estudiantes pueden aprender y lograr metas altas como resultado de una enseñanza efectiva.
- Todos los estudiantes deben tener acceso a un riguroso currículum basado en calidad e instrucción basado en investigación.
- Para el éxito del estudiante es necesario intervenir a la más temprana indicación de necesidad. (Pre k-12)
- Un sistema comprensivo de niveles de intervención es esencial para llevar a cabo todas las fases de necesidad.
- Los resultados de los estudiantes mejoran cuando los datos de progreso y comportamiento se usan para informar las decisiones de instrucción.
- La colaboración entre educadores, familias y miembros de la comunidad es la base para resolver problemas y hacer decisiones de instrucción efectivamente.
- La participación de las familias en forma continua y acertada mejora el éxito del estudiante.
- Todos los miembros de la comunidad escolar deben continuar aprendiendo y ganando experiencia para lograr más capacidad y apoyo.
- El liderazgo efectivo a todo nivel es crítico para la implementación de RtI.

Vocabulario Esencial RtI
Sociedad Familia Escuela: Es la asociación de las familias y el personal de la escuela en proceso de RtI incluyendo el diseño de las intervenciones para la escuela y el hogar.

Equipo de Resolución de Problemas: Es la unión de personas (que incluye padres, maestros de educación regular y especial) que se reúne para evaluar la información del estudiante, luego planean y vigilan la intervención recomendada.

Modelo de Niveles de Intervención: Provee diferentes niveles de instrucción (universal, específica, intensiva) basado de acuerdo a la respuesta de la intervención.

Haciendo Decisiones Basada en Datos: Es el proceso de planeamiento para el éxito del estudiante (académico y de comportamiento) a través de una continua vigilancia del progreso y análisis de los informes o datos.

Evaluación Específica: Es una evaluación formal e informal que enfoca un plan específico para ofrecer un programa y/o intervención apropiado para el éxito del estudiante.

Proceso de Resolución de Problemas: El equipo que colabora trabaja en base a los diferentes niveles de la estructura del modelo que incluye las recomendaciones, vigilancia y evaluación de las intervenciones basado en las informaciones o datos.

Proceso del Equipo RtI Resolución de Problemas

- Definir el problema, Medir el comportamiento directamente.
- Analizar el problema, Validar el Problema, Identificar las variables.
- Desarrollo del Plan, Implementar el Plan intentado, Vigilar el Progreso, Modificar cuando sea necesario.
- Evaluar Respondiendo a la Intervención.
RtI Family & Community Partnering Reminder Cards

RtI Family & Community Partnering
“On the Team and At the Table”

1. Education is a shared responsibility between home and school.
2. Families are equal partners.
3. Students achieve more when families and schools work together.

http://www.cde.state.co.us/rti/Family.htm

RtI Partnering Tips for Educators, Families, and Community Resources

- Use teaming words: WE, OUR, US, SHARED, PARTNER, TOGETHER.
- Engage in two-way communication.
- Focus on the student and what works.
- Use data to make decisions.
- Tell students you are working together.
- Respect differences; listen to understand.
Sociedad Familia-Escuela Recordatorio
Tarjeta de “Presentación

RtI Sociedad Familia & Comunidad
“En Equipo y En la Mesa”

1. La educación es una responsabilidad compartida entre el hogar y la escuela.
2. Las familias tienen igual sociedad.
3. Los estudiantes logran más cuando las familias y las escuelas trabajan juntos.
4. La participación de la comunidad apoya el éxito de la escuela.

http://www.cde.state.co.us/rti/Family.htm

RtI Consejos de Sociedad para los Educadores, Familias y Recursos de la Comunidad

- Use palabras de equipo: NOSOTROS, NUESTRO, COMPARTIR, SOCIEDAD, JUNTOS.
- Establezca comunicación interactiva.
- Concéntrese en el estudiante y vea que funciona.
- Use los datos de recolección para hacer decisiones.
- Informe a los estudiantes que están trabajando juntos.
- Respete diferencias; escuche para entender.
Sample RtI Partnering Job Descriptions

Principal
✓ Communicate RtI tiered partnering philosophy and processes to staff and families
✓ Provide permission to shift staff practices, responsibilities and time
✓ Support teacher and family needs for training and encouragement
✓ Supervise RtI partnering
✓ Include partnering “on the agenda”
✓ Include partnering in all policies and publications
✓ Invite community resources to partner

Classroom Teachers
✓ Engage in two-way communication and relationship building with all families
✓ Work together with families to mutually support a struggling student in the universal tier
✓ Team in the RtI problem-solving process when a student is struggling
✓ Tell students that home and school are partners
✓ Share class rules and homework expectations with students and families
✓ Encourage learning at home and school every day

Educational Specialists
(Gifted Educators, Special Educators, Interventionists)
✓ Same as for classroom teachers
✓ Explain specific role and expertise to families and community team members
✓ Apply specific skills to teaming process

School Mental Health Professionals
(School Psychologists, Social Workers, Counselors)
✓ Serve as collaborative consultant/liaison for partnering in RtI problem-solving process
✓ Support school-wide universal, targeted and intensive partnering processes
✓ Link families with community resources
✓ Provide conflict resolution skills when needed
✓ Team with language and cultural liaisons
✓ Apply specific skills to teaming process

“Front Line” Staff (Clerical, Custodial, and Cafeteria)
✓ “Meet and greet” all families when in building
✓ Welcome family volunteers
✓ Provide expertise in ensuring all families have access to needed services
Families

✓ Share in ongoing two-way home-school communication and relationships
✓ Work together with teachers to support a struggling student
✓ Team in RtI with school and community when a student is struggling; do this by sharing information and helping plan, implement, and monitor coordinated interventions
✓ Tell student that home and school are partnering
✓ Support learning at home by (1) communicating about school with frequent and systematic discussions about school, encouragement regarding schoolwork, and providing resources; (2) supervising homework, TV viewing, and after school activities; and (3) implementing or monitoring any planned specific interventions
✓ Ask school for help and support when needed

Students

✓ Know the school values home-school partnering
✓ Share with home about school and school about home, including completing home and class learning assignments
✓ Know and advocate for own learning needs at home and school
✓ Participate on own planning team if appropriate

Parent-Teacher Organization

✓ Reach out to all families
✓ Support tiered partnering practices
✓ Provide family expertise and “parent-to-parent” support
✓ Provide family education opportunities
✓ Create a “family center” in the school

Community Resources

✓ Know about RtI and partnering components in the school
✓ Support schools and families in communicating and collaborating
✓ Help plan implement, and monitor specific student interventions when appropriate
✓ Support school success as a research-based resiliency factor
School-Parent Agreement (Policy)/Compact

SAMPLE TEMPLATE*

NOTE: Each school receiving funds under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) must develop a written school-parent policy that is jointly developed with parents for all children participating in Title I, Part A activities, services, and programs. The compact, also jointly developed with parents, is part of the school’s written parental involvement agreement (policy) developed by the school and parents under section 1118(b) of the ESEA. The compact must outline how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State’s high standards.

School Parental Involvement Agreement (Policy)

The ____ name of school ____ will:

Involve parents in the planning, review, and improvement of the school’s parental involvement policy, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way.

Involve parents in the joint development of any school wide program plan, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way.

Hold an annual meeting to inform parents of the school’s participation in Title I, Part A programs, and to explain the Title I, Part A requirements, and the right of parents to be involved in Title I, Part A programs. The school will convene the meeting at a convenient time to parents, and will offer a flexible number of additional parental involvement meetings, such as in the morning or evening, so that as many parents as possible are able to attend. The school will invite to this meeting all parents of children participating in Title I, Part A programs (participating students), and will encourage them to attend.

Provide information to parents of participating students in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon the request of parents with disabilities, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that parents can understand.

Provide to parents of participating children information in a timely manner about Title I, Part A programs that includes a description and explanation of the school’s curriculum,
the forms of academic assessment used to measure children’s progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet.

On the request of parents, provide opportunities for regular meetings for parents to formulate suggestions, and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions about the education of their children. The school will respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible.

Provide to each parent an individual student report about the performance of their child on the State assessment in at least math, language arts and reading.

Provide each parent timely notice when their child has been assigned or has been taught for four (4) or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified within the meaning of the term in section 200.56 of the Title I Final Regulations (67 Fed. Reg. 71710, December 2, 2002).

Optional School Responsibilities

To help build and develop a partnership with parents to help their children achieve the State’s high academic standards, the ___name of school___ will:

Recommend to the local educational agency (LEA), the names of parents of participating children of Title I, Part A programs who are interested in serving on the State’s Committee of Practitioners and School Support Teams.

Notify parents of the school’s participation in Early Reading First, Reading First and Even Start Family Literacy Programs operating within the school, the district and the contact information.

Work with the LEA in addressing problems, if any, in implementing parental involvement activities in section 1118 of Title I, Part A.

Work with the LEA to ensure that a copy of the SEA’s written complaint procedures for resolving any issue of violation(s) of a Federal statute or regulation of Title I, Part A programs is provided to parents of students and to appropriate private school officials or representatives.

Schools and parents may use the sample template below as a framework for the information to be included in their school-parent compact. Schools and parents are not required to follow this sample template or framework, but if they include all of the bolded items listed under “Required School-Parent Compact Provisions” below, they will have incorporated all of the information required by section 1118(d) to be in the school-parent compact. Schools and parents, in consultation with students, are
encouraged to include other relevant and agreed upon activities and actions as well that will support effective parental involvement and strengthen student academic achievement.

* * * *

School-Parent Compact

The ____ name of school _____, and the parents of the students participating in activities, services, and programs funded by Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (participating children), agree that this compact outlines how the parents, the entire school staff, and the students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership that will help children achieve the State’s high standards.

This school-parent compact is in effect during school year ____________.

Required School-Parent Compact Provisions

(Provisions bolded in this section are required to be in the Title I, Part A school-parent compact)

School Responsibilities

The ____ name of school ____ will:

Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the participating children to meet the State’s student academic achievement standards as follows:

[Describe how the school will provide high-quality curriculum and instruction, and do so in a supportive and effective learning environment.]

Hold parent-teacher conferences (at least annually in elementary schools) during which this compact will be discussed as it relates to the individual child’s achievement. Specifically, those conferences will be held:

[Describe when the parent-teacher conferences will be held.]
Provide parents with frequent reports on their children’s progress. Specifically, the school will provide reports as follows:

[Describe when and how the school will provide reports to parents.]

Provide parents reasonable access to staff. Specifically, staff will be available for consultation with parents as follows:

[Describe when, where, and how staff will be available for consultation with parents.]

Provide parents opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child’s class, and to observe classroom activities, as follows:

[Describe when and how parents may volunteer, participate, and observe classroom activities.]

Parent Responsibilities

We, as parents, will support our children’s learning in the following ways:

[Describe the ways in which parents will support their children’s learning, such as:

- Monitoring attendance
- Making sure that homework is completed
- Monitoring amount of television their children watch
- Volunteering in my child’s classroom
- Participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to my children’s education
- Promoting positive use of my child’s extracurricular time
- Staying informed about my child’s education and communicating with the school by promptly reading all notices from the school or the school district either received by my child or by mail and responding, as appropriate
- Serving, to the extent possible, on policy advisory groups, such as being the Title I, Part A parent representative on the school’s School Improvement Team, the Title I Policy Advisory Committee, the District wide Policy Advisory Council, the]

Optional Additional Provisions

Student Responsibilities (revise as appropriate to grade level

State’s Committee of Practitioners, the School Support Team or other school advisory or policy groups.
We, as students, will share the responsibility to improve our academic achievement and achieve the State’s high standards. Specifically, we will:

[Describe the ways in which students will support their academic achievement, such as:

Do my homework every day and ask for help when I need to.
Read at least 30 minutes every day outside of school time.
Give to my parents or the adult who is responsible for my welfare all notices and information received by me from my school every day.]

__________________________________________
School Parent(s) Student

__________________________________________
Date Date Date

(PLEASE NOTE THAT SIGNATURES ARE NOT REQUIRED)

*This sample template is not an official Colorado Department of Education document. It is provided only as an example.

### Six Types of Involvement in Family-School-Community Partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Involvement</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting</td>
<td>Schools help families with families’ basic obligations.</td>
<td>Parent Education classes on basic health, safety, discipline of family members; referral services, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating</td>
<td>School’s obligation to communicate clearly to families about school programs and children’s progress. Families should communicate issues child is facing at home and how they are being handled</td>
<td>Letters, memos, phone call, back-n-forth book, conferences, newsletters, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering</td>
<td>Families come to school to support the learning environment in the classroom.</td>
<td>Reading to children; leading art project or other activity; parent “show-n-tell”; etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning at Home</td>
<td>School responds to parent or child-initiated requests and ideas from teachers to assist families in working with their children at home in learning activities that are coordinated with the child’s classroom instruction.</td>
<td>Assisting with homework, monitoring and assisting in web searches, providing activities typically done at home that coincide with classroom activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-Making</td>
<td>Guarantees that parents and community activists are consulted and involved in the decision-making of parent associations, advisory committees, and school improvement groups.</td>
<td>PTA, Policy Council, CDM, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating with the Community</td>
<td>School and families involve the institutions that share responsibility for children’s development and success.</td>
<td>Programs that provide access to community support services for children and their families.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Seis Tipos de Involucramiento en Colaboraciones de Familias-Escuelas-Comunidades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tipo</th>
<th>Definición</th>
<th>Ejemplos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crianza</td>
<td>Las escuelas ayudan a familias con obligaciones básicas.</td>
<td>Clases para padres sobre salud, seguridad, disciplina, servicios comunitarios.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comunicación</td>
<td>La escuela debe comunicarse claramente con familias sobre programas escolares y el progreso de cada estudiante. Familias deben comunicar situaciones que el niño/a enfrenta en casa y como intentan solucionar los problemas.</td>
<td>Cartas, notas, llamadas por teléfono, libros de casa a escuela, conferencias, boletín, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntariado</td>
<td>Familias atienden a la escuela para apoyar el aprendizaje que ocurre en las clases.</td>
<td>Leer a los niños, dirigir un proyecto de arte u otra actividad, los padres demuestran una habilidad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aprendizaje en Casa</td>
<td>La escuela responde a peticiones de padres o estudiantes y de ideas de maestras/os para asistir a familias que quieren trabajar con sus hijos en casa en actividades de aprendizaje que complementa la instrucción en clase.</td>
<td>Ayuda con la tarea, dirigir y supervisar búsquedas en el Internet, dar actividades en casa que coinciden con actividades en la clase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poder para Hacer Decisiones</td>
<td>Garantiza que padres y líderes comunitarios son consultados e involucrados en los grupos o comités que toman decisiones y en grupos que intentan mejorar a la escuela.</td>
<td>PTA, Consejo para Pólizas, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colaboración con la Comunidad</td>
<td>Escuelas y familias involucran a instituciones que comparten la responsabilidad para el desarrollo y éxito de los niños.</td>
<td>Programas que dan servicios comunitarios a niños y sus familias.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Partnering Vocabulary

It is helpful for partners to have a common language focusing on shared beliefs and understandings. Families, educators and community members can encourage each other to practice using the words as they work together. These are sample concepts related to RtI – they can be adapted and/or provided in different languages.

- **Words**: “WE”, “OUR”, “US”

- **Goals**: What do we want to ACHIEVE TOGETHER?

- **Roles**: How can WE PARTNER around that?

- **Data**: How will WE KNOW it is working?

- **Input**: What does the family or educator or community resource THINK, FEEL, KNOW?

- **Decisions**: Are WE ALL “on the team and at the table”?

- **Responsibilities**: What are WE EACH doing?

- **Students**: What is BEST for OUR student?
Partnering Stories from the Field

Stories help people think about how new ideas or shifts in practice can be applied to their day-to-day lives. As you shift to family-school-community partnering, it might be helpful to begin collecting your own stories. A strategy might be to share ideas in faculty or PTA meetings, or have a venue where both families and educators highlight positive experiences – such as a link on a website or an entryway bulletin board. Stories can lend courage and practical guidance during times of change. Even though the stories are categorized by level, most have implications for all families and educators.

High School Stories

- After hearing about family-school partnering, a high school chemistry teacher reported that she had gone to her building administrator and asked about the possibility of putting the topic “on the agenda” for their professional learning communities. He wondered why, saying that high school students should be emancipating from their parents and developing their own sense of responsibility. However, he said she was welcome to try the discussion with her colleagues. The professional community thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity and now has it “on the agenda” for every meeting, with different department representatives sharing about various homework ideas and home-school communication strategies they are implementing. One of the best results is that the students actually are saying they now have more positive discussions about school with their parents. A student was quoted as saying, “Yeah, it gives us something to talk about at dinner”.

- A high school math teacher asked every student to bring his/her parents’ preferred email or method of communication to class as a homework assignment. She then made email group lists of families and students for each period. She emails once or twice a week with class information on homework, concepts being taught, and asks for comments and questions. The student is always copied so they are in the “loop”. If the family doesn’t have email or prefers another communication venue, the information is provided to them in that way. The teacher reports that homework assignments are almost 100% completed (significant change from the year before) and that when she has a concern about a student, she is able to problem-solve with the parent quickly, efficiently and collaboratively.

- A high school foreign language teacher had been thinking about leaving the teaching profession. She was discussing this issue with her supervisor. The supervisor suggested that maybe she could start her year by calling every parent and leaving a brief message about herself, class, interest in sharing information, and invitation for families to call with questions, concerns, or positive news. She had 150 students, but said it took her less than an hour a day for one week. She
reported having had many of the families saying thank you, responding with input, and that the students were surprised, but seem pleased “in their teenage ‘not admitting it’ way”. She says this has become her best year yet and she will stay in teaching. She will continue this practice every year.

- A high school teacher shares that, “I firmly believe that types of relationships and encounters that are in firm place between teachers and parents can have a profound effect on student learning and growth…. one of the reasons is that when students know that parents and teachers are working together, the students know they have support. They may not freely admit it, but this means a lot to high school students… I find joy in discussing my students with their parents and developing ways to improve their education… teacher education programs and school administration need to prepare teachers for positive parent Interactions and stress why they are so important.” (adapted from Mbadu, 2008)

- The same high school English teacher relates the following ideas about the importance of communicating with families. “A new student transferred into our school. He had a reputation for being tough, bad, and defiant. As time went on, I began to wonder what all the fuss was about. When the mother came into parent-teacher conferences, I shared that I enjoyed her son very much and he was earning a B in the class. She began to cry and told me that a teacher had never said anything nice about her son.” (adapted from Mbadu, 2008)

- A high school English teacher reported that the only training – in college, graduate school, or on the job - he had experienced in working with parents was “How to Survive Parent Conferences”. This had been a four-hour seminar in his teacher education program. He wanted to have professional development in working with families, as he found it so important in his everyday practice. He worked to find a class, didn’t find one, and so decided to work with his district to develop some in-service opportunities for other teachers.

**Middle School Stories**

- An active advocate for family partnering, a seventh-grade teacher, was asked to describe her approach to communicating with families. Specifically, she was asked why she contacts parents, for what reasons, when, and how. The comments provided by this teacher represent several principles of effective communication and partnership skills, including the following:

  - The student and his or her learning are at the center of all communications.
  - Communication remains at the level of the issue and does not become personal.
  - Concerns, not problems, are described.
  - Parents are expert and critical to the success of the school’s efforts.
• Contact is made early, before the concerns emerge or escalate.
• Positive messages are conveyed at the beginning of and throughout the contact.
• The communication is constructive and not punitive for the child.
• Perspective taking is encouraged.
• Good listening skills are important.
• Follow-up contacts are made.

“Before I begin, there is one assumption that drives all of my dealings with parents. I believe that parents are my most important assets as a teacher. In addition, there are two things that I always think about when contacting a parent. First, I believe that all parents do what they believe is the best for their child . . . We may not agree with their opinion or action, but they do their best. Second, and perhaps most importantly, I try to think about how I would want a teacher or adult to handle the situation if this were my child (how would I want to be treated, and how would I want my child to be treated?) (adapted from Christenson & Sheridan, 2001).

• A middle school RtI problem-solving team, including a student and her single-parent father, was meeting to brainstorm ideas about supporting positive behavior and homework completion. The family was from Russia and had been in the United States for two years – both father and daughter spoke English. The father shared that the daughter was a concert-level violinist and practiced with a teacher approximately three hours a day. No one at the school knew about this. The father then shared that the student’s mother had been killed while holding her daughter’s hand during a Russian political uprising about four years earlier. No one at the school knew about this either. The school had been considering a special education referral, but with the new information decided to partner with the family around a specific home-school-home support plan. The father began to cry and thanked the school staff for “caring so much about my daughter and me - no one had ever done that before”. The student cried and said it was so important that “my father came to school and could understand what it was like for me here.”

• A middle school student with a specific learning disability had not made any progress in math from one year to the next. He was two years below grade level. His family was very anxious and asked the school to change the student’s service delivery model from paraprofessional support in a general education classroom/grade level curriculum to a more intensive individual or small group focus on specific skills he needed. The school was not amenable to this request, saying that this was the special education math model at the school. The family strongly considered filing for due process, but instead opted to try and partner with the school staff in looking at data, exploring all available options, and trying
agreed-upon interventions. They requested a “problem-solving” meeting. The school agreed and upon examining all existing data with the family, decided to shift some resources and use homeroom time to support some specific small group remedial efforts for the student, in addition to the general education classroom. A basic skills curriculum was chosen. The family offered to provide some home tutoring. The team decided to review weekly skill tests and meet again in two months. The student began to show progress and demonstrated significant positive change on the state assessment, moving from unsatisfactory to partially proficient. Both school and family worked together to focus on student outcomes. Each party had to shift somewhat, but found common ground based on student data - an effective partnering strategy.

**Elementary Stories**

- An elementary teacher has “learning open houses” once a month when families can come and share in a learning experience with their students. The topics and time vary, sometimes beginning at 7:00 in the morning or over the lunch hour or after dinner. The students are very successful at “helping their families to attend and participate”. The family members take away tools to support learning at home and report liking the “small” feel of the event.

- An elementary principal encourages teachers to have a “come early” or “stay late” day once a week so that they can connect with parents who are bringing or picking up their children at the school day care. The teachers then can take “flex time” on another day. The school has many working families. This has become a well-publicized and highly utilized communication venue for families and teachers. The strategy provides teachers more flexibility and the families feel that the school truly wants their partnership.

**References**


Secondary Schools’ Fact Sheet*

Family-school partnering in secondary schools is effective in increasing student achievement, reducing risky behaviors and improving postsecondary outcomes. When secondary schools think about family-school-community partnerships, there are special and specific challenges. These are as follows:

- Teachers have more students for lesser time;
- Schools are bigger;
- Families live farther away;
- Teachers tend to be “academic specialists” and have not typically been involved with families;
- Students are balancing independence and need for guidance and support;
- Subject matter, instruction, systems are more complex;
- Families need more guidance in supporting school and postsecondary success – it is more complicated and their role more complex.

It is important to intentionally plan for partnership at the secondary level. Forming a partnering team and/or putting partnering “on the agenda” for an existing group(s) is important. The following strategies have been shown to be effective.

- Personal outreach (students doing community service can make calls).
- Invitations to participate (students can invite and be present).
- Tying partnering to academic improvement goals (align partnering with school improvement priorities).
- Interactive homework (gives teenagers and family members something to talk about, reinforces learning, and families can be involved).
- Frequent and two-way communication between teachers and families (with students’ awareness of it occurring as a support for them).
- Students using their voices (ask and listen).
- Teacher support and training (see what will be helpful...).
- Focusing on transition years (elementary to middle, middle to high, and high to post-secondary).

Specific components of the Colorado RtI Family and Community Engagement Module have been designed to be useful in secondary schools, as well as earlier levels. Sample documents, including those for teachers and principals, can hopefully be adapted with a secondary “twist”. “Partnering Stories from the Field” has numerous middle and high school teacher reports. Targeted and Intensive tools focusing on problem solving can hopefully be useful to deans, case managers, and/or other staff who may be working with problem-solving teams – all were developed to be flexible in format and communication venue. Examples of partner planning are from secondary schools.
Resources with specific reference to strengthening family and community partnerships at the secondary level are listed below.


National Network of Partnering Schools
http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/Research/researchpubs.htm - middleandhighschools

TIPS: Teachers Involving Parents in Homework
http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/tips/index.htm

* Material in this fact sheet was adapted from Epstein et al., 2002.
Classroom

- Sample Teacher Letter
- Sample Family Sharing Sheet
- Sample *Partners in Learning* Pledge
- Building Trusting Family-Teacher Partnerships
- Two-Way Communication: A Teacher’s Practical Points
Sample Teacher Letter

August 2009

Dear Families,

Welcome to the new school year at ______________________. I am looking forward to getting to know you and your student this year. I wanted to take this opportunity to share some information about my class and encourage you to communicate with me.

I am committed to helping every student learn in my class. I believe it is important for families and schools to work together and share responsibility for student success. I value family members’ expertise about their children. Families know a student best and I can learn from you. Also, it is important for the students to know that teachers and families are working together to support their learning. Specifically, I want to share about class communication, expectations, and events for the upcoming year. More specific information from your students will be coming your way in the next few weeks.

Communication {Include own information; these are examples only}

- I believe in having two-way ongoing communication with families. I will be calling, emailing) each of you during the first month of school to introduce myself and ask about any questions or feedback you have for me. Please let me know how you would like me to contact you. I invite you to call, email, write notes, make an appointment to share information, questions, or concerns about your student. Throughout the year, I will do the same. It is important to share both positive messages and concerns.
- You will have the opportunity to share about your child and your expectations for the year on a Sharing Sheet which your student will bring home to you the first week of school.

Class Rules, Positive Supports, Homework {Include own information}

- Our class rules and positive support system will be coming home with your student the first day of school. It will be helpful for your student to explain to you how the class will operate this year and how we will celebrate successes and solve problems. Our student will see how you and I will be working together to support school success as you discuss this information.
- Homework helps students to practice what they are learning. It also helps families to understand what and how students are achieving at school. {You can expect.....................}. Students benefit from having their families support finding time and space to complete homework. Also, once a month the students will ask you to participate in an assignment with them and then share your ideas about the activity. If ever there is confusion, questions, or concerns about homework, please let me know. I will also let you know if I am worried about your student’s homework completion.
Events {include own events}
- We will be having several “learning open houses” during the various times (usual class time, before and after school) when you will be invited to come and experience our learning activities.
- Conferences are led by each student and focus on progress, learning and solving any problems. Every family is invited and encouraged to attend with their student. If transportation or childcare is a problem for you, please let me know. We will make every effort to make it work for you and your student.

Thank you for reading this letter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Please return the form below with your comments and contact information; or email me at ____________________________; or leave a message at __________________________.

Sincerely,

8th Grade Science Teacher

Comments and Contact Information:

Family Comments:

Name:__________________________________________

Preferred Contact:

___ Email: ______________________________

___ Mail: ______________________________

___ Note home with student

___ Other: ______________________________

__________________________________________
Sample Family Sharing Sheet

It is important that schools and families partner for student success. In teaming, it is helpful for teachers to know about students and their families’ views about school. Please complete this sheet and return to me. It is suggested that students and family members complete this together. Individual comments can be put in the labeled boxes. Please contact me with any questions or input at any time. I look forward to working with you this year. Thank you. ________________________________, Teacher I can be reached at: ________________________________

Student: __________________ Family Member(s): __________________ Date: ______

1. What does your student like about school?

2. What are your student’s successes in school?

3. What are your student’s challenges in school?

4. Does your student feel liked and accepted at school? If not, why not?

5. What are some of your student’s interests, activities, and hobbies?

6. What does your student feel is his/her greatest talent or skill?

7. Does your student enjoy reading? _______ math? _______ writing? _______ Other (Please identify)? ________________________________

8. What challenges does your student have in reading? ________________
   math? ________________ writing? ________________
   Other (Please Identify)? __________
9. Describe how your student does homework?

**Student Comments:** What else would you like me to know about you this year?

What suggestions do you have for our class?

Other thoughts?

**Family Comments:** What else would you like me to know about you or your student?

Please share your goals for your student’s school year.

Please tell me the best way to contact you.

Other thoughts?
Sample Partners in Learning Pledge

Our school is committed to teachers, students, and families all working together for student school success. We would like every teacher, student, and a family member to sign an agreement which says they will work as a team to support student learning at school and home. This pledge will be reviewed and discussed several times during the school year. Please call ______________ with any questions, ideas, or input about this pledge – or if you would like to meet personally. We welcome your feedback.

Teacher Pledge:
✓ I will encourage all my students to do their best and to engage in learning every day.
✓ I will frequently ask students to discuss school and homework with their families.
✓ I will help students and families to understand the school/class rules and homework expectations, including positive supports.
✓ I will communicate with students and families about student progress and/or concerns throughout the year. I will welcome family input, questions, and ideas.
✓ Other (Optional): __________________________________________

Signature(s): __________________________ Date(s): __________________________
Signature(s): __________________________ Date(s): __________________________

Family Pledge
✓ I will encourage my student to do his/her best in working hard and learning every day.
✓ I will frequently discuss homework, school activities and education’s importance with my student.
✓ I will provide time, space and support for homework on a daily basis. This may not be at our home or with me, but will be in our community or with family.
✓ I will communicate with the teacher(s) about my student’s progress and/or concerns throughout the year and share my input, questions, and ideas.
✓ Other (Optional): __________________________________________

Signature(s): __________________________ Date(s): __________________________
Signature(s): __________________________ Date(s): __________________________

Student Pledge
✓ I will do my best in school and work hard at learning every day.
✓ I will discuss school activities, conferences, notices, rules and teacher information with my family.
✓ I will complete homework and share what I am learning with my family.
✓ I will ask my teacher or family when I need help or have questions or problems.
✓ Other (Optional): __________________________________________

Signature(s): __________________________ Date(s): __________________________
Building Trusting Family-Teacher Partnerships

Always consider parents/families as a resource and help them to recognize themselves as resources. Provide the context for them to feel “empowered.”

- Help parents see that they have power, dignity, and authority in rearing their children.
- “Empowering” parents is intentional and ongoing; it involves mutual respect, critical reflection, and caring so that parents can gain access to and control over resources.

Negotiate roles and responsibilities.

- Include parents in decision making for their child.
- Explain to parents the importance of families in learning, right away and often.
- Invite and expect parents to be partners in classroom management and homework.
- Clarify how they can help provide options.
- Encourage parents to be assertive.
- Develop a “parent-school agreement.”

Reduce barriers.

- Have contact with every parent early in the school year.
- Establish ongoing communication systems; include “good news” phone calls.
- Use two communication formats that are both school → home and home → school.
- Bridge the language gap – strive to have the best communication between school and home with all parents, including those who speak a language other than English by accessing school and community resources; always try; ask students to help identify ways to communicate with their families.

Create a spirit of cooperation and coordination.

- Explore what they want school to accomplish.
- Devise opportunities for involvement that they see as practical and meaningful – this can be supporting learning at home.
- Work to coordinate learning at home and school.
- Reach out to parents with warmth and sensitivity.
- Acknowledge that sharing power with parents is not abdicating your role; rather, it provides an opportunity to understand interests and goals of parents and learn how to achieve them.

Engage in perspective-taking.

- Identify why parents might not be involved:
  
  - Diverse school experiences of families.
  - Economic and time constraints.
  - Diverse linguistic and cultural practices.
  - Different values.

- “Resistance” is always a form of communication. Parents may be seen as “resistant,” or they may simply hold different perspectives. Lack of communication about what is important to each party leads to notions of some parents being “resistant” or “hard to reach.” Genuinely attempt to develop a relationship with every family.
Make your classroom welcoming and family friendly.
- Consider physical appearance that is inviting, open to all.
- Consider affective climate that fosters warmth, sensitivity, and trust.
- Hold class “open houses” with students and families at variable times so that there can be shared learning experiences.

Other Strategies
- Use multiple efforts – no one way will work for all families.
- Make events fun!
- Plan for logistical barriers and build on flexibility.
- Invite parents to help determine the best way for them to be involved.
- Meet parents on their turf.
- Identify a parent who can help spread good messages.
- Make sure roles are meaningful.
- Identify why parents might not be involved and try to take their perspective; reach out.

Teacher Self-Reflection Tool

Consider the following – Do I . . . ?
- Connect with every family at the first of the school year?
- Always start with a positive message?
- Convey the desire to work together to help the child?
- Express the fact that parent’s input and perspective are important?
- Convey respect for family members as experts of their child?
- Identify the circumstances under which parents feel more/less comfortable and try to understand those feelings?
- Approach parents flexibly, using multiple efforts?
- Elicit, openly value, and use parents’ input?
- Ask open ended questions to get parents’ full input?
- Really listen to parents?
- Thank the parent for listening, caring, and helping?

Consider how to achieve the following – How can I . . . ?
- Use language to promote “cohesion?” For example:
  o Use common language (“us,” “we,” “let’s”)
  o Use parents’ words
  o Convey understanding
- Ask the parent for help in a respectful, mutually gratifying way?
- Clarify responsibilities of each person?
- Avoid advice giving?
- Meet parents “on their turf?”
- Make events fun?
- Make sure roles are meaningful?
- Plan for and prevent logistical barriers?

Two-Way Communication: A Teacher's Practical Points

Two-Way Communication

**Definition:** “Through two-way communication, families and teachers can be informed of what is expected related to child behavior, achievement, and discipline. This sets the stage for establishing shared goals, mutual decision-making, avoiding misunderstanding, and helping families understand how to reinforce learning and reading in the home” (Esler et al., 2008, pg. 927).

- Use the word “family” or “family member” instead of parent.
- Be persistently positive; send “good news” messages throughout the year.
- Personally contact every family during the first month of school by email or voice mail or note or visit. Do the following:
  - explain partnering and shared responsibility belief, classroom management system, and homework expectations;
  - ask about student and family;
  - request ongoing communication;
  - tell students you are doing this;
  - ask for the family’s preferred method of communication.
- Develop email list serves and communicate regularly; in secondary schools, copy emails to your students; ask for feedback and input.
- Use a “Sharing Sheet” and ask each family/student to complete with relevant information about goals, interests etc.
- Provide every family with a class communication “notepad” to share messages, information with teacher; use the same system for your personal, written messages home.
- Include a space for family comments on all class communication.
- Use partnering vocabulary – “our”, “we”, “us”.
- Focus two-way communication on student success.
- If problems or miscommunication, listen and identify facts; then work toward a student-focused decision; use data.
- Implement a tiered partnering approach with families who are hesitant, exhibit barriers, or when home-school conflict is present. Neither teachers nor family members need to “go it alone”. Use school and community resources to develop these partnerships. Know more time is often needed.

Classroom Management System

**Definition:** A classroom management system includes the key elements of instruction, motivation, and discipline occurring simultaneously (Jones, 2000).

- All two-way basic communication strategies apply.
• In your initial communication to each student’s family, briefly share information about your classroom management system and that the student will be sharing more specific details with them.
• Share rules, positive supports, and operating procedures with families in multiple venues such as on the website, emails, notes home, handbooks.
• At the beginning of the term, “assign” students to discuss the operating information with family members and request written, email, and/or verbal confirmation/input from family members; follow up if you don’t hear back.
• If you are worried a student might have challenges in following rules or engaging in learning, work proactively to build a trusting relationship with the family; communicate frequently about positive news before concerns are evidenced, so that there is the expectation that home and school will be involved in solving problems; include your observation of student strengths.
• If a student is struggling with learning or behavior issues, invite the family to partner in solving the problem with the student. Develop a plan which includes two-way communication and support.

**Homework**

**Definition:** “Tasks assigned to students by school teachers that are meant to be carried out during non-school hours” (Cooper, 1989, pg. 7).

• All general two-way communication strategies apply.
• In your initial communication to each student’s family, briefly share information about the class homework expectations for home and school.
• In your homework description, explain the following: specific philosophy; teacher, student, family roles; time expectations and any individualized procedures; expectation of early home-school communication if problems occur; explanation of shared problem-solving process to resolve concerns.
• Emphasize the importance of families supporting learning at home, every day.
• Share homework information with families in multiple venues such as website, emails, notes home, and handbooks.
• At the beginning of the term, “assign” students to discuss the homework process with family members and request written, email, and/or verbal confirmation/input from family members; follow up if you don’t hear back.
• Develop “interactive homework” assignments where students and families work together in learning; this can be students teaching families, or shared activities; inform families; do regularly; require family feedback for each assignment; share that you don’t expect perfection; proactively problem-solve for barriers such as illiteracy or language differences. (Constantino, 2008; Epstein et al., 2002)
• Provide individualized “homework help” for students or families when either might be struggling independently or together – it is all about student success.
References
III. Targeted and Intensive Tiers: Tools and Resources

- RtI Problem-Solving Partner Packet
- Sample Coordinated Interventions for Educators, Families, and Community Resources
RTI Problem-Solving Partner Packet

- Best Practices In RtI Problem-Solving
- Questions for Families, Educators, and Community Resources to Ask About the Problem-Solving Process
- Sample Problem-Solving Family Invitation Phone Script
- Sample Stakeholder Problem-Solving Card/Brochure Insert (English)
- Sample Stakeholder Problem-Solving Card/Brochure Insert (Spanish)
- Sample Problem-Solving Process Referral with Family Input, Student Strengths, Community Resources
- Sample Problem-Solving Team Meeting Invitation
- Sample Problem-Solving Process Home Information
- Sample RtI Plan with Home-School Coordination and Communication
- Sample Sociocultural Interview/Interpreter Information
- Helping Families Understand the Special Education Process Within RtI
- IEP Partnering Within an RtI Model
Best Practices in RtI Problem-Solving

- School/district written and verbal RtI information is provided for all staff, families, and community resources; multiple venues such as back-to-school nights, conferences, websites, office brochures, newsletters, weekly folders, and cultural/language liaisons are suggested.
- Classroom teachers and family members work together to intervene when concerns are first evidenced.
- Teachers and family members jointly refer to the problem-solving process when progress is insufficient (referrals can be separate, but collaboration works best).
- Students are included in the process as appropriate.
- Family members and participating community resources are invited to be full team members in the problem-solving process, with the classroom teacher and other specialists; if they can't attend meetings, a two-way communication structure is established so there is ongoing information sharing.
- The RtI problem-solving process is explained to families before the first meeting, including how and when a referral for special education evaluation might occur.
- Family members and participating community resources are supported in sharing student strengths and other information before process begins, so their information is available in decision-making.
- Family members and participating community resources are included in goal setting, intervention planning, and monitoring; learning interventions are coordinated between home and school.
- Copies of all referral information, plans, progress data, and diagnostic/prescriptive assessment reports are given to families.
- There is some mechanism to transfer student problem-solving process data to future schools, so that interventions can continue if indicated.
- A staff “RtI liaison” (such as teacher, mental health professional, specialist, or administrator) is identified. This person can support the family and community partners throughout the RtI process. Activities might include helping families to share information; answering questions; explaining interventions, data, and movement up and down the tiers; accessing needed family resources; and providing information on learning at home. (This “RtI liaison” could be the designated case consultant.)

Materials

- Written information explaining school-specific RtI, roles, terms, and process (brochure, insert, articles, meeting invitation etc.)
- Format for families and community resources to share home information in advance of process
- Referral and intervention plan documents with “space” for family and community resource information and data
Reminders

- Each educator, family, and community partner has unique knowledge about the student and interventions. Each partner has a specific role “on the team and at the table”.
- RtI problem-solving is focused on the student and his/her school success at all times.
- Identifying strengths as part of the process is important.
- Sharing data (and visual data is best) provides common information for all stakeholders. Multiple data sources and points are important in decision-making.
- Much of the RtI problem-solving process takes part outside of meetings. It is intervening, monitoring, communicating, and adjusting to ongoing data.
- When students struggle, adults are worried. Teachers, students, family members, and community resources may have personal or emotional reactions. It is important to understand and work with these issues, always continuing to focus on, “What is best for OUR student?”
- Targeted and intensive interventions, by definition, take more time and resources for schools, families, and community agencies.
Questions for Families, Educators, and Community Resources to Ask About the Problem-Solving Process

✓ Do we have all the information we need to prescribe an intervention, including that from the family?
✓ Have we prioritized concerns?
✓ How are we including the student?
✓ Does the intervention have a research base or is it considered best practice? Do we have the resources to implement?
✓ Are the family, and any appropriate community resources “on the team and at the table”? Do they have RtI information? Are they receiving copies of plan, data?
✓ Are the baseline and target (goal) measurable?
✓ Do we have a consistent progress-monitoring tool?
✓ How will home and school learning be coordinated?
✓ Who is consulting with teacher, interventionist, family, community resource?
✓ How will we know if the intervention is being implemented as intended (with fidelity)?
✓ How will we make a decision of whether to continue the intervention, move to another tier, or consider possible referral for special education evaluation?

Note: Special thanks to family advocates who helped in formulating these questions which can help guide problem-solving teams in their work.
Sample RTI Problem-Solving Phone Script

Hello, my name is ______________ and I am a teacher/psychologist/social worker/counselor/administrator at ______________. (It is presumed that family and teacher have been working together on universal interventions.) As ______________ (child’s teacher) has shared with you, we have a process which helps teachers and families to plan interventions when students are struggling. Your child has been referred to our school’s ______________ {name of team}. The problem-solving team is a group of educators, including ______________ {specific for school, situation} who meet regularly to monitor an individual child’s progress and to explore options to help each of our students reach his or her highest potential. You are a member of your child’s team.

I am going to serve as the consultant for you, the teacher and your child through this process. This means ______________ {describe specific role on team, in process}. As a team member, you are invited to all team meetings. If you can’t attend a meeting we will try to reschedule or find a time to share information so that we have your input and ideas. The team determines your child’s current learning levels, chooses interventions, sets goals, measures progress, and decides if other options should be considered. Another team purpose is to decide how home and school can work together in supporting school success.

We would like to hear about how you see your student, as you know your child best, and give you the opportunity to ask questions. This will take about 15 minutes. Is this a good time? Or would you prefer I call again? Or is it better to share information another way? We can email or send home information and questions. Or you are welcome to come to school and we can talk in person.

(If now, proceed to #1 - #6; if another time, venue then make arrangements to follow-up accordingly.)

1. I have some questions about how you see your student and school. This information will be helpful to the _______ team. Please share your thoughts if you are comfortable doing so – if not, that is fine or you can share with us at a later time.

   a. What are your child’s strengths and interests?
   b. Do you have any academic or behavior concerns about your child? If so, please identify.
   c. Please share any information about your child, which might be helpful in understanding his/her school life. Please comment on the following: homework, previous school history (any school problems?), attitude about school, special support outside of school (tutoring, therapy etc.), past or present medical issues.
   d. Any other information you would like to share?
e. What information/support/materials would be helpful to you in working with your child at home?

2. How is the best way for us to communicate? Email, phone, note?

3. We will be sending some written information home about our RtI problem-solving process and what specifically you can expect as a team member. {Brochure? Insert? Home information Form? Meeting Invitation?}

4. Our first meeting is ____________________. How does that work for you? {discuss any changes, or how information can be shared}

5. Do you have any questions for me? Please feel free to contact me in the future. My number is ___________. My email is ___________.

### Response to Intervention (RtI) Problem-Solving Process

**What Families and Community Resources Need to Know...**

- You will be given copies of your student’s plan and progress data.
- Always ask questions if you don’t understand; you are part of the team.
- Sometimes a team member may want to know more about how your student learns and will suggest a test; you will be a part of the decision and know about the results.
- When students move up the tiers, it is because they need more intense intervention.
- If your student continues to need ongoing learning support, you and/or the team may decide to refer for a special education evaluation.

---

### Response-to-Intervention (RtI) Problem-Solving Process

**What Families and Community Resources Need to Know...**

- RtI is new for everyone; schools are learning too.
- You are full members on your student’s team.
- Share your knowledge, as you know your student best.
- Share your student’s strengths.
- Ask how your student is included.
- Try and attend meetings; if you can’t, ask about ways to share information that can work for you.
- You are part of the decision-making about your student.
- The team will look at current achievement levels, set goals, prescribe interventions, and monitor progress.
- Much of problem-solving happens outside of meetings at both home and school – ask how you can help at home in a way that can work for your family.
Respondiendo a la Intervención (RtI)
Proceso de Resolución de Problemas

Que Necesitan Saber las Familias y Recursos de la Comunidad...

- Usted recibirá copias del plan y los datos del progreso de su estudiante.
- Siempre haga preguntas si no entiende; Ud. es parte del equipo.
- A veces algún miembro del equipo querrá saber como aprende su estudiante y sugerirá una prueba; Ud. será parte de esa decisión y conocerá los resultados.
- Cuando el estudiante sube de niveles, esto es porque necesita intervención más intensiva.
- Si su estudiante necesita continuar con apoyo de aprendizaje, usted y/o el equipo pueden decidir referir para una evaluación de educación especial.

RtI Sociedad entre la Familia de y la Comunidad

Ejemplo RtI Tarjetas de Interés
Resolución de Problemas/ Folleto Incluido

Recursos de la Familia y Comunidad

CDE
Departamento de Educación de Colorado
http://www.cde.state.co.us/rti/
Sample RtI Problem-Solving Process Referral

This summary is used to gather and review data before a Problem-Solving Team meeting. When existing data sources contain information in the categories below, attach these instead of completing the relevant section.

Name of Student: __________________________ Date: ____________
DOB: _______ Age: ____ Grade: ____ Teacher/Counselor: ______________________
Primary Home Language: ________ (Attach home language survey, if completed by ELL staff)
ELL Program: _____________________________ Dates: _____________________________
________________________
Parents/guardian: _________________________ Phone#: ____________________________
________________________
Address: ________________________________________________________________
Email: ______________________________________________________________

FAMILY PARTNERING
Family Communication Dates:
Home-School Coordination Plans and Dates:
Family Input (or attach Home Information sheet):

STUDENT STRENGTHS/INPUT

CURRENT INFORMATION
Current Grades/Classroom Functioning:

Describe Strategies/Interventions/Special Programs Implemented Currently or in Past Including 504, Special Education, ILPs, ALP—attach if appropriate:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Strategy/ Intervention / Program</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Student Response (include data points when available)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HEALTH HISTORY**

**Vision Assessment:** None □ Partial □ Complete □ ________________ (describe outcome)

**Hearing Assessment:** None □ Partial □ Complete □ ________________ (describe outcome)

**Nurse Visits:** # of visits ____  Summary of concerns ________________

**Significant Medical History:** ________________________________________________

**Physical Health Concerns:** _______________________________________________

**Psychiatric/Mental Health History:** ___________________________________________

**Medications (Names, dosage, doctors):** _______________________________________

**SCHOOL HISTORY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in School (pre k – 12): ____</th>
<th>Number of Schools Attended: ____</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades Repeated: ____</td>
<td>Attendance Concerns: No □ Yes □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(If yes, please describe when and to what degree):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Group Assessment Results/CSAP (if available, attach reports)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Year/Test/Result</th>
<th>Year/Test/Result</th>
<th>Year/Test/ Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other - Identify</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Discipline History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th>Yes, Date(s)</th>
<th>Describe Incident or Concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Danger Assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspensions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expulsions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Office Referrals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Classroom Behavior Observations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### List Community Agencies/Practitioners Involved with Student/Family:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
<th>Date of Service</th>
<th>Nature of Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other Notes:

Sample Problem-Solving Team Meeting Invitation

Dear __________________,  
Date: __________ 

Our school is committed to supporting student success. If a student experiences difficulty in academics or behavior, it is important for schools and families to work together. You are invited to participate in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of your child’s interventions. Your participation as a team member provides essential information about your child. Thank you for partnering with us. Please communicate with us at any time.

As a follow-up to our previous conversation, we would like to invite you to a team meeting on ______________ at _____ in _______. The purpose of this team meeting is to share information about ___________ and discuss how we can work collaboratively with you to provide school and home support. Staff members who work with your child will be at the meeting, as well as others who can help in planning for success. If there is anyone you would specifically like to attend from school or elsewhere, please let us know. If this time won’t work for you, we will try to reschedule, or we will find a time to share information so that we have your input and ideas.

Attached is a home information form. This information can help the school staff in learning more about how you see your child. We will be contacting you before the meeting to review this information with you and answer any questions you may have about this team partnering process.

Sincerely,

Position:_________  Phone:_________  Email:_________
Attachments: Home Information Form, Brochure with Insert

Sample Problem-Solving Process Home Information

Student Name: _____________________ Date: ____________________
School: ___________________________ Grade: __________________
Family Members(s) Completing Form: _____________________________

When is the best time for you to meet with school staff?
How is it best to communicate with you (email - please specify preferred address, telephone, written notes, in person)?

What are your child’s strengths and interests? (These can be at school or home, in academic or social areas.)

Do you have any academic or behavior concerns about your child? If so, please identify.

Please share any information about your child, which might be helpful in understanding his/her school life. Please comment on the following areas:

Homework:

Previous School History (including any special programs):

Attitude About School:

Special Support Outside of School (tutoring, therapy etc):

Past or Present Medical Issues:

Other:

What information/support/materials would be helpful to you in working with your child at home?

Please share any other information which you think will be helpful in supporting your child’s school success. Feel free to attach additional information and/or use the back of this sheet.

### Sample RtI Plan with Home-School Coordination & Communication

**NOTE:** PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM CAREFULLY. DETAILED INFORMATION WILL CONTINUE TO BE USEFUL FOR DECISION-MAKING IN FUTURE YEARS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Student</th>
<th>ID Number</th>
<th>DOB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Area of Concern:</th>
<th>Date Identified:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Interventions

**Research-Based Prescriptive Intervention:**
(Specific Curriculum/Program and/or Instructional Strategy)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date From</th>
<th>Grade(s)</th>
<th>School/Setting</th>
<th>Title of Provider</th>
<th>Hrs/W</th>
<th>S/T Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Specific Measurable Outcome:**

**Home–School Coordination and Communication:**

#### Progress Monitoring

**Measurement Tool:**

**Frequency of Measurement:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurement Tool:</th>
<th>Frequency of Measurement:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targeted Outcome Data Point:</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline Data:</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interim Data:</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### RTI

- Was the intervention carried out as planned?  □ Y □ N
- Why or why not?  
- Has the student benefited from the intervention?  □ Y □ N
- Has the specific measurable outcome been attained?  □ Y □ N

**Recommended Action:**

- Continue Current Intervention
- Return to Universal Instruction
- Other (Describe under Details)

**Recommended Action:**

- Alternative Intervention (Describe under Details)
- Focused Assessment (Describe under Details)

**Details:**

**Intervention Facilitator:**

---

Sociocultural Interview and Interpreter Information

The sociocultural interview is a thorough, focused interview with a student who is an English Language Learner (ELL) and his/her family. Social, emotional, behavioral, and community experiences are explored within the cultural context. If a student and his/her family are identified as refugees or immigrants, knowledge of the circumstances leading up to that identification can be important in understanding educational needs. Information should be collected from significant family member(s) and students, thereby providing essential data for intervention development. It is important to work with the interpreter in helping the family to understand the desire of the school to partner with them and to answer the family’s questions about their child’s learning, school, and teacher. Questions are open-ended, with targeted follow-up as appropriate. It is suggested that the interview be conducted by a school mental professional, teaming with interpreter/cultural liaison.

- **Refugee**: Person who is unable or unwilling to return to his/her country because of a well-founded fear of persecution.
- **Immigrant**: One who comes to a new country voluntarily.

Student Name: ___________________________ Date: __________________________
Family Members Interviewed: ___________________________
Interpreter: ___________________________ School Staff: ___________________________

**INSTRUCTIONS TO THE FAMILY:**
“We are here to learn more about you and _______ (student) so we can better understand how to support him/her at school. We want to work with you in helping him/her learn and ______________________ (specific concerns or problems, solutions). We want to give you a chance to ask us about school and ______ progress, also. Please only respond to questions which are comfortable for you. First, we would like to learn about you and your family.

Cultural Context – “Please share about your family’s country of origin and how you came to the United States.” Follow-up, as appropriate, with questions below.
- Where did the family come from?
- Refugees or immigrants?
- Sons/daughters of refugees/immigrants?
- How was the travel experience? traumatic?
- Family members left behind?
- Loss of significant family members?
- Other traumatic events...assault, imprisonment, political prosecution etc?
- How has the student/family acculturated or not?
- Significant customs held on to and/or significant customs from home country not able to observe?
- Religious affiliation (if any), observant or cultural?
- What local cultural community does the student/family feel connected to?
- Supporting other extended family members?
- What kind of western education, medicine, and mental health support is accepted and/or believed in?
- How is time observed in home culture?
- How are schools or education different (if so) in their home culture?

**Summary/Notes/Comments:**

**Description of Family** – “Please tell us about your family.” Follow-up, as appropriate, with questions below.
- Family constellation?
- Family supports?
- Number of moves, birthplace of student?
- Family development and medical history?
- Description of household size?
- Sibling relationships?
- Parent relationships?
- Family history of mental illness, developmental disabilities?
- Legal issues?
- Education?
- Student responsibilities?
- Family rules and discipline?
- Family’s connection/involvement to community; parent/family employment?
- Accessibility and knowledge of weapons if applicable?
- Language(s) spoken in the home?
- Transportation?

**Summary/Notes/Comments:**

**Community Adjustment** – “Tell us about ___________ and what he likes to do.” Follow up as appropriate with questions below.
- Student’s outside/extracurricular activities - clubs, sports, volunteering, church/religion?
- Strengths?
- Involvement with the law?
- Outside therapies, tutoring, counseling?
- Family connections to the community- home and/or adopted?

**Summary/Notes/Comments:**
School Adjustment/History: “How do you see ___________ doing in school?” What kind of problems, if any, do you see? Here or in the past? Follow-up, as appropriate, with questions below.

- Schools attended...regular or irregular attendance?
- Strengths?
- Family concerns about student, school?
- Type of schools attended...rural, urban?
- Academic history-strengths, needs, grade experiences?
- History of special education services?
- Peer relationships in school?
- Student and parent school goals?
- Teacher comments/feedback?
- Teacher relationships?
- Social adjustment?
- School transitions, current school situation-feelings, adjustment, special programs?
- Homework management?
- Discipline records?

Summary/Notes/Comments

Social and Emotional Adjustment/History: “How does ___________ do in getting along with others, solving problems etc...?” What kind of concerns, if any, do you have about ___________?” Follow-up, as appropriate, with questions below.

- Personality, behaviors?
- Strengths?
- Coping skills?
- General health?
- Developmental milestones?
- Adaptive behavior?
- Hospitalizations?
- Television and computer time-access, amount of time etc.?
- Peer relationships-younger, older, stability, positive, negative?
- Independence?
- Self-advocacy?
- Any concerns about prior danger, suicidal thinking, self-harm etc.?

Summary/Notes/Comments:

Questions from the Family:
Recommendations/Suggestions/Plans/Next Steps (Interventions, Focused Assessment, Family Support, Other):

Family Contact Information:

School Contact Information:

Adapted from Cherry Creek Schools
Interpreter Information  
Dynamics of Interpretation/Translation Handout

These suggestions and ideas can make the interpretation/translation process more successful.

**Environment**  
Make it comfortable and non-threatening.  
Limit the conference to a small number of people. Introductions are very important.  
Give name and position of each person present and what role each plays in relationship to the child.

Seating arrangements are critical. The interpreter should not block off the parent from the school professional. Eye contact must be maintained among the participants. The school professional should address him/herself directly to the parent. Assume the parent may understand more than that for which s/he may give himself/herself credit.

**Timing**  
Give parents a time reference.  
The use of an interpreter requires extra time. Plan the conference accordingly.

**Listening**  
All school personnel should maintain a responsive posture and their attention. Body language can cue the school personnel to ask relevant questions.

**Values/Attitudes**  
Be aware of the attitude you display. It often sets the tone of the conference.

**Heterogeneity of language/culture**  
Parents may be different even though they are from the same ethnic group. Avoid stereotyping and be sensitive to individual differences.  
Type of language may vary within an ethnic group depending on several factors such as education and experience.

**Recording**  
Determine some system of note taking or recording.

**Authority**  
The school personnel are ultimately responsible for the conference, procedure, information sharing, content, and intent.  
The interpreter should not “editorialize” comments made by any of the school personnel or by the parent.
Remember to remain neutral.
Present as a united team.

**Closing remarks**
The school professional in charge should make the closing remarks, summarize, ask final questions, discuss follow-up, and reassure parents.

Available at English Language Learners with Exceptional Needs (ELLEN)
[http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-ELL.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-ELL.asp)
Helping Families Understand the Special Education Process within RtI

**Why:** The RtI process is new for many schools and families. It will be implemented in all Colorado schools by August, 2009 as "insufficient progress in response to scientific, research-based intervention” is now a required criterion for identifying students with specific learning disabilities. Individual schools and districts will be establishing the process in unique ways to best fit their systems.

In Colorado RtI, families are considered full and equal partners who share responsibility with schools for student success. They work with teachers at the universal tier; and are “on the team and at the table” during the problem-solving process for targeted and intensive tiers. It is important that families understand that interventions and progress monitoring become more intense if progress is not satisfactory. Also, it is important for families and staff to know that a referral for special education evaluation is always an option but especially if a child continues to struggle after interventions have been implemented and/or the team suspects a disability. The evaluation process is now “full and individual” which includes and is informed by data gathered through the problem-solving process.

**Who:** Principals, classroom teachers or other school staff can explain the RtI process to families. If a student is referred to the problem-solving process, it is suggested that someone (“RtI liaison”) be available to answer questions, support coordinated home-school interventions, and work with logistical concerns.

**When:** It is suggested that the multi-tiered RtI framework be explained to all families in a school at the beginning of the school year. When a child is referred to the problem-solving process for more targeted or intensive interventions, a review of the tiers and eventual options, including that of special education, should occur.

**Tools:** Four tools are suggested to help families understand the RtI problem-solving partnering process. These are as follows: (1) local or Colorado Department of Education RtI brochure or other written article; (2) home information form designed to help families share relevant data with other team members; (3) a school-specific explanation of the process, and team members’ (including family members) responsibilities throughout the process; and (4) a meeting invitation focusing on the partnering role.

**Sample Team Invitation:** We want every child to succeed in school. In working towards this goal, our school is implementing a multi-tiered Response to Intervention model for academic and behavior learning. In this model, each teacher strives to provide the best possible instruction for all students. Teachers and families work together to support students when they are struggling in the classroom. However, some students
may need more targeted or intensive instruction to be successful learners. Thus, we have educational specialists and materials to support these students’ more intense learning needs. A problem-solving team prescribes interventions, monitors progress, and evaluates effectiveness. Family members of students involved in this process are full team members, working with school staff to coordinate learning opportunities. If a child continues to struggle after interventions and/ or if a disability is suspected, a referral to special education may be considered, using the data from the problem-solving process. {Specific information as to process, team members, meetings, home information, availability etc.}
IEP Partnering Within an RtI Model

Family-school partnering in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process supports positive student outcomes. These three areas highlight this partnering for families and staff. Similar actions for all IEP components can be incorporated throughout the process.

1. Assessment

Legal Note: 34 CFR §300.305 Review of existing evaluation data. As part of an initial evaluation (if appropriate) and as part of any reevaluation under this part, the Multidisciplinary Team and other qualified professionals, must – (1) Review existing evaluation data on the child including - (i) evaluations and information provided by the parents of the child...(2) on the basis of that review, and input from the child’s parents, identify what additional data, if any, are needed to determine – (i)(a) if the child is a child with a disability ...and the educational needs of the child.

✔ For initial eligibility or reevaluation, school representative calls or meets with family to review existing data, obtain family input, and together decide on an assessment plan.
✔ If student has been in the Response to Intervention (RtI) process, a family will have already been partnering around goals, interventions, progress monitoring, and any diagnostic/prescriptive assessment to inform instruction.

2. Measurable Goal Development

Legal Note: 34 CFR §300.320(a) Definition of individualized educational program... (2)(i) IEP is a written statement that must include a statement of measurable annual goals...300.321 IEP Team (a) General. The public agency must ensure that the IEP Team for each child with a disability includes - (1) the parents of the child.

✔ Before the IEP is developed, ask family about ideas for measurable annual goals and share other IEP team members’ ideas based on assessment results and other existing data. Prioritize goals as a team.
✔ Ask family and other team members how learning can be coordinated between home and school.
✔ If student has been in RtI process, intervention plan goals may be continued.

3. Progress Monitoring

Legal Note: 34 CFR §300.320(a)(3) The IEP must include a description of – (1) how the child’s progress toward meeting the annual goals described in paragraph (2) of this section will be measured; and (ii) When periodic reports on the progress the child is making towards meeting the annual goals...will be provided.

✔ Family and school staff together decide on reasonable, time-efficient tools to measure progress, including reviewing how existing monitoring means might be used.
✔ Discuss how home monitoring might be included in plan.
✔ If child has been in the RtI process, monitoring may be continued.
Sample Coordinated Interventions for Educators, Families, and Community Resources

- School-Home-School Notes: Description and Sample
- Conjoint Behavioral Consultation: Description and Sample
- Wraparound: Description
School-Home-School Note*

Definition: A School-Home-School Note serves as a two-way communication and intervention system which can identify, monitor, and support a student’s new learning behavior at school and/or at home.

Steps to Establishing A School-Home-School Note

- Have a conversation with teachers and family members
- Include the student in explaining and planning at an appropriate time
- Identify strengths and prioritize any concerns
- Determine how goal(s) will be defined
- Determine the criteria for success
- Design the School-Home-School Note with two-way communication capacity, including the student
- Establish responsibilities
- Identify possible rewards for home and school – with student
- Establish a reward system
- Monitor and modify the system
- Provide feedback for everyone
- Troubleshoot or maintain or fade as needed

* Or Home-School-Home Note
Sample School-Home-School Note or Sample Home-School-Home Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Spelling</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Homework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Follow Directions 1st Time</td>
<td>0 1 2</td>
<td>0 1 2</td>
<td>0 1 2</td>
<td>0 1 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finish Assignments</td>
<td>0 1 2</td>
<td>0 1 2</td>
<td>0 1 2</td>
<td>0 1 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take Short Break When Needed</td>
<td>0 1 2</td>
<td>0 1 2</td>
<td>0 1 2</td>
<td>0 1 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTALS**

**Teacher Initials**

**Family Initials**

**Student Initials**

Successes: _______________________________________________________

School Comments: ________________________________________________

Home Comments: ________________________________________________

**Goal for Today:** _______%

**Total for Today:** _______%

**KEY**

0 = No
1 = Somewhat...
2 = YES!!
Conjoint Behavioral Consultation: Description

Introduction to Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

I’d like to start by telling you a little about Conjoint Behavioral Consultation and what to expect. Generally, consultation involves teachers, parents, and a consultant putting their heads together to figure out how to best help a particular child. To do this we use a structured problem solving approach. This approach requires about 3 or 4 meetings lasting between 45 and 90 minutes each. It is important that each participant be present at each meeting, including parents, teachers, and anyone else who knows the child well and can help develop and implement a plan. In this way we all share in the plan and maximize the chances that the child can be successful.

During the first meeting we spend time deciding what the main concern is, and then we make plans to watch more closely so that we can better understand it. Often there will be several concerns that could be addressed, but we will need to focus in on one to get started and make the process more manageable. If you agree, we’d also like an observer to come in and observe the child to provide more information to us. After we have all had a chance to observe the primary concerns for about a week, we have a second meeting which focuses on discussing what we have observed until think we have a good understanding of the problem and what might be causing it. At our second meeting we also create a plan to help the child. This plan is developed collaboratively with input from all involved because all participants have important information and ideas to share. Then, we put the plan into place. The third interview is a chance for us to get together to decide how the plan is working and make any changes. All the way through the process it will be important for all of us to carefully monitor and keep track of how things are going so that we can be sure that progress is being made. As you can see this process requires somewhat of a time commitment and we won’t be creating a plan until the second meeting.

Does this sound like something that would be helpful? If so, there is an informed consent form that needs to be signed. The form reviews information that I just shared, as well as ensures that all information will be completely confidential and that your participation is voluntary. Please take a few moments to read the form, ask questions, and sign if everything is agreeable.

Sample Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

### Conjoint Home/School Goals

#### STRENGTHS

- **Home**
- **School**

#### PRIORITIES

- **Home**
- **School**

#### WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE?

#### WHAT HAPPENS AFTER?

#### PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR

#### HYPOTHESES

#### INTERVENTIONS

**Name:**

**Date:**

**Participants:**

**Definition of Priority Behavior:**
Essentials of Wraparound

- Wraparound is **community-based** in that services and supports are implemented in natural home, school, and community environments. Restrictive settings are accessed only for brief periods of stabilization.

- A **team**, consisting of the people who know the student best and represent his/her strengths, interest and needs at home, school, and in the community, develops an **individualized plan**. Unlike traditional human services that have relied on a deficit model, the plan is **strengths-based**. Positive reframing to assets and skills is a key element in all individualized planning.

- Wraparound is **culturally competent** as the composition of the team and the services and supports assure a fit to the person’s culture, values, and life experiences.

- **Families as full and active partners** is a key value reflected in the process as families choose their team members and the team prioritizes needs identified by the family and interventions, supports and services reflect family choice.

- Wraparound is not a service but is a **team-based process, involving family, natural supports, agencies, and community supports**.

- **Flexible approach and funding** across systems is needed to ensure the plan fits the student and family instead of trying to make the student/family fit into a given program.

- **A balance of formal and informal resources** are evident in wraparound plans as teams have the capacity to create individualized supports, activities, and interventions unique to the individual student and his/her family.

- The team makes an **unconditional commitment** to change the plan to meet the needs of the student/family rather than referring them to another program or service system. If the plan doesn’t work the team is committed to changing the plan to ensure success instead of blaming the student/family for an ineffective plan.

- The development and implementation of an individualized service/support plan is based on a **community-neighborhood, interagency, collaborative process**. Plans address multiple life domains which include family, living situation, educational, social/emotional, vocational, safety, medical, spiritual/cultural, and legal.
- Outcomes are determined and measured through the team process. The outcomes are defined by blending family/student and school voices and achieving consensus around clearly stated expectations and definitions of success. The outcomes are focused on normalization. Normalized needs are those basic human needs that all persons (of like, age, sex, culture) have in common.

**Wraparound: Steps to Success**

1. Initial Conversations
2. Clarify Agenda, Determine Logistics/Rules for Meeting
3. Introduce Team Members by Role and Goal
4. Develop or Review Mission Statement

**What Information Do We Have or Need to Make Decisions?**

5. Start Meeting with Strengths
6. Identify Needs Across Life Domain

**What Do We Need to Accomplish?**

7. Prioritize Needs

**What Action Do We Need/Want to Take and When?**

8. Action Planning

**How Will We Decide if it is Working and What to do Next?**

9. Assign Tasks/Timelines, Ensure Commitment, and Set Next Meeting Date

IV. Planning and Evaluation: Tools and Resources

- Data Sources
- Plan Templates
Data Sources

- School-Wide
  - Tiered RtI Family & Community Partnering Checklist
  - Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnerships (Davis et al.)

- Stakeholders: Educators, Families, Community Resources
  - RtI Partnering Survey and Needs Assessment
  - Planning Team Feedback
  - FAQs
  - Challenges and Solutions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Families/Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intensive Tier</strong></td>
<td>A FEW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualize family-school partnering plans when needed. (Examples: home visits, daily communication)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide school, family, and community wraparound when needed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide conflict resolution support and process when needed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Targeted Tier</strong></td>
<td>SOME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designate people and process to reach out individually to encourage families and staff who may be hesitant or uncomfortable.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include families as equal partners throughout the RtI Problem-Solving Process; provide support and information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support teachers and families in mutually developing and implementing individual student plans; coordinate interventions between home and family. (Examples: ALP, IEP, BIP, ILP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide support/education groups and targeted resources for families and/or teachers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link with community resources.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Universal Tier</strong></td>
<td>ALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate beliefs: 1. Education is a shared responsibility between home and school; (2) Families are equal partners; (3) Students achieve more when families and schools work together; (4) Community participation supports school success.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share RtI process with all staff, family, and community resources.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create caring, culturally responsive climate for all families; provide culture and language liaisons. (Example: family volunteers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide parenting education, “learning at home”, and volunteer opportunities; contact families personally whenever possible. (Example: family to family)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make school and classroom visiting available.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve families in school decision-making.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SCHOOL**

- Contact every family to create ongoing, two-way communication.
- Ensure each family, including students, understands school/class rules and homework expectations.
- Plan and explain how families and teachers will partner if a student struggles.
- Tell students that school and home are working together to support their success.

(adapted from CDE, 2008b; Epstein et al, 2002)
Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnerships

Karen Clark Salinas, Joyce L. Epstein, & Mavis G. Sanders, Johns Hopkins University,
Deborah Davis & Inge Douglas, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

This instrument is designed to measure how your school is reaching out to involve parents, community members, and students in a meaningful manner. The measure is based on the framework of six types of involvement developed by Epstein (1993). At this time, your school may conduct all, some, or none of the activities or approaches listed. Not every activity is appropriate at every grade level. The selected items show that your school is meeting challenges to involve all families in many different ways that will improve the school climate, strengthen families, and increase student success in school. Your school may be conducting other activities for each type of involvement. These may be added and rated to account for all major partnership practices that your school presently conducts.

**Directions:** Carefully examine the scoring rubric below before rating your school on the six types of involvement. As you review each item, please circle the response that comes closest to describing your school. A score of 4 or 5 indicates that the activity or approach is strong and prominent. A score of 1, 2, or 3 indicates that the activity is not yet part of the school’s program, or needs improvement. The results provide information on the strength of current practices of partnership, and insights about possible future directions or needed improvements in your school’s partnership program.

**Scoring Rubric**

1 – **Not Occurring:** Strategy does not happen at our school.

2 – **Rarely:** Occurs in only one or two classes. Receives isolated use or little time. Clearly not emphasized in this school’s parental involvement plan.

3 – **Occasionally:** Occurs in some classes. Receives minimal or modest time or emphasis across grades. Not a prevalent component of this school’s parental involvement plan.

4 – **Frequently:** Occurs in many but not all classes/grade levels. Receives substantive time and emphasis. A prevalent component of this school’s parental involvement plan.

5 – **Extensively:** Occurs in most or all classes/grade levels. Receives substantive time and emphasis. A highly prevalent component of this school’s parental involvement plan.
I. PARENTING: Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our School:</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Conducts workshops or provides information for parents on child development</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provides information, training, and assistance to all families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Produces information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Asks families for information about children's goals, strengths &amp; talents.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools &amp; to help schools to understand families.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Provides families with information/training on developing home conditions or environments that support learning.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Respects the different cultures represented in our student population.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other types of activities</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## II. COMMUNICATIONS:

Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children’s progress.

### Our School:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Occurring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1. Revise the readability, clarity, form, and frequency of all memos, notices, and other print and non-print communications. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. Develops communication for parents who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. Establishes clear two-way channels for communications from home to school and from school to home. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. Conducts a formal conference with every parent at least once a year | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. Conducts an annual survey for families to share information and concerns about student needs & reactions to school programs, and their satisfaction with their involvement in school. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. Conducts an orientation for new parents. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. Sends home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. Provides clear information about the curriculum, assessments, and achievement levels and report cards. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. Contacts families of students having academic or behavior problems. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. Develops school’s plan and program of family and community involvement with input from educators, parents, and others. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. Trains teachers, staff and principals on the value and utility of contributions of parents and ways to build ties between school and home. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
### III. VOLUNTEERING: Recruit and organize parent help and support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our School:</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Occurring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Conducts an annual survey to identify interests, talents, and availability of parent volunteers, in order to match their skills/talents with school and classroom needs.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Creates flexible volunteering and school events schedules, enabling parents who work to participate.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Trains volunteers so they use their time productively.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Recognizes volunteers for their time and efforts.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Schedules school events at different times during the day and evening so that all families can attend some throughout the year.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV. LEARNING AT HOME: Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our School:</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Occurring Rarely Occasionally Frequently Extensively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Reduces barriers to parent participation by providing transportation,</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>childcare, flexible schedules, and addresses the needs of English language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learners.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Encourages families and the community to be involved with the school in</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a variety of ways (assisting in classroom, giving talks, monitoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>halls, leading activities, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other types of activities</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Provides information to families on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.  
   | Rating                  |
   | Not Occurring Rarely Occasionally Frequently Extensively |
   | 1  2  3  4  5           |

2. Provides ongoing and specific information to parents on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve.  
   | Rating                  |
   | Not Occurring Rarely Occasionally Frequently Extensively |
   | 1  2  3  4  5           |

3. Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their child.  
   | Rating                  |
   | Not Occurring Rarely Occasionally Frequently Extensively |
   | 1  2  3  4  5           |

4. Assists families in helping students set academic goals, select courses, and programs.  
   | Rating                  |
   | Not Occurring Rarely Occasionally Frequently Extensively |
   | 1  2  3  4  5           |

5. Schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member.  
   | Rating                  |
   | Not Occurring Rarely Occasionally Frequently Extensively |
   | 1  2  3  4  5           |
### V. DECISIONMAKING: Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our School</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our School</td>
<td>Not Occurring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Has active PTA, PTO, or other parent organization.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Includes parent representatives on the school's advisory council, improvement team, or other committees.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Has parents represented on district-level advisory council and committees.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Involves parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review, and improvement of programs.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Involves parents in revising the school/district curricula.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Includes parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other groups in the school.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Develops formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Includes students (along with parents) in decision-making groups.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Deals with conflict openly and respectfully.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Asks involved parents to make contact with parents who are less involved to solicit their ideas, and report back to them.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### VI. COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY

Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our School:</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other types of activities</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Not Occurring</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Extensively</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our School:</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| 1. Provides a community resource directory for parents and students with information on community services, programs, and agencies. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. Involves families in locating and utilizing community resources. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. Works with local businesses, industries, and community organizations on programs to enhance student skills and learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. Provides “one-stop” shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. Opens its building for use by the community after school hours | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. Offers after-school programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, and volunteers | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. Solves turf problems of responsibilities, funds, staff, and locations for collaborative activities to occur | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. Utilizes community resources, such as businesses, libraries, parks, and museums to enhance the learning environment. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Other types of activities | 1 2 3 4 5 |
A. What major factors have contributed to the success of your school’s family and community involvement efforts?

B. What major factors have limited the success of your school’s family and community involvement efforts?

C. What is one of your school’s major goals for improving its program of school, family, and community partnerships over the next three years?

References:


Note: For information on the National Network of Partnership Schools at John Hopkins University, visit the Network’s Website: www.nnps.jhu.edu/2005. For information about NWREL’s services, call 1-800-547-6330 ext. 568, or access the Website at www.nwrel.org.
Partnering Survey and Needs Assessment

Our school is developing new ways to support our teachers and families in working together. We are trying to coordinate home and school learning. This survey was developed to gather data about family-school-community partnering beliefs and practices from all stakeholders who support our students. Please answer questions from the perspective of your specific role. The Beliefs and Needs section is for all respondents. There are separate Practice sections for school/community staff and family members – please only answer the section that is appropriate for you. A brief Needs Assessment asks about what would be helpful to you. We welcome your comments. All this information will be used to plan our partnering activities.

Please Check Information that Relates to Your Role with Students:

**Educator:** ____ Position: ____________________________________________

**Family Member:** ____ Student Grade Level(s): __________________________

**Community Resource:** ____ Affiliation: ________________________________

**Name (Optional):** ____________________________ Date: ________________

I would like to participate on a family-school community partnering committee at our school. My contact information is as follows (name, email or phone or address):

Adapted from the following sources:


Thanks to the family members, professionals, and graduate students who provided input as to this survey’s content.
## FOR FAMILY MEMBERS AND SCHOOL STAFF/COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### Beliefs (What I Think...)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I...</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Believe that families and schools share responsibility for a student’s education.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Believe that students should see their teachers and families working together in relation to their everyday school experiences and learning.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Believe that schools and families each have areas of expertise/information to share in supporting student success.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Believe teachers and family members should communicate regularly about both positive events and concerns.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Believe that I have the skills/training to work as a partner in supporting school success for students.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Believe that teachers and family members should share concerns when either sees a student beginning to struggle or becoming discouraged.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Believe that teachers and family members should each have responsibilities for student planning and interventions when concerns are identified.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Believe that students should be partners in home-school communication and in intervention planning.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Am confident in my ability to develop and maintain family-school partnerships in my specific role (as staff, family member, or community resource).</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Know about the Response to Intervention (RtI) process in my school.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## FOR FAMILY MEMBERS

### Practices (What I Do...)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>No at All</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Very Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Participate in problem solving with teachers when there are academic or behavior concerns, then assist with setting goals and developing a plan.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Have resources, training and support to help me with the following: encouraging my child in school; providing resources, time and space for homework; talking to my child about school and learning.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Use information from home when I discuss my child's progress, needs, problems, and possible solutions with the school.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Know the following for my student’s school, classes and activities: rules, how progress is reported, and homework expectations for students and families.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Communicate regularly (two-way) with teachers for positive reasons, routine matters, progress updates, and concerns if needed.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Share my student’s strengths, challenges, interests, and attitudes about school with the teachers.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ask teachers what I can do to support my student’s learning in our home or through the community.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Have visits in my home from school staff.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Feel valued and respected by teachers and school staff.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Visit my child’s school.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Participate with teachers in the Response to Intervention (RtI) problem-solving process.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## FOR SCHOOL STAFF AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### Practices (What I Do...)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I...</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Very Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Include families in problem solving when there are academic or</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behavioral concerns; then set mutual goals, monitor progress,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>review and revise plan with families as needed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provide resources, training and support to help families with</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the following: encouraging their child in school; accessing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resources, time and space for homework; talking to their child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about school and learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Use data points from multiple sources when I discuss a child’s</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>progress, needs, problems, and possible solutions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Share with families the following: school, class, and activity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rules; how progress is reported; homework expectations for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students and families.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ask each family to share about student’s strengths, challenges,</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interests, and attitudes about school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Communicate regularly (two-way) with families of all my students</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for positive reasons, routine matters, progress updates, and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concerns if needed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ask parents what they need to actively support student learning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the home and partner with the school or the community.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Visit families in their homes.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reach out to families with cultural, language, gender,</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>socioeconomic, and learning differences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Invite families to come to school.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Participate with families in the Response to Intervention (RtI)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problem-solving process.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOR FAMILY MEMBERS, SCHOOL STAFF, COMMUNITY RESOURCES
NEEDS ASSESSMENT (What Would Be Helpful to Me....)

I would like more information and/or training on the following topics:

- RtI
- Creating learning opportunities at home
- Parenting classes
- Teacher-family communication strategies
- Family volunteering opportunities at home or school
- Involving families in school decision-making
- Teachers and families working together when a student is struggling
- School-community partnering
- Area community resources
- Conflict resolution strategies for teachers and families
- Homework strategies
- Communication with other families
- Other – Please identify

The best time for me to attend workshops or trainings is:

- Weekday Mornings (Before School)
- Weekday Afternoons (After School)
- During School Day
- Weekday Evenings
- Saturdays
- Online
- Written Workbooks, Materials
- Other – Please Identify

Please share any comments or questions regarding how our school can best support families, teachers, and community resources working together in coordinating student school success.
Planning Team Feedback

Our school is working on supporting teachers, families and community resources working together in coordinating student success. This survey was developed to gather staff, family and community feedback about partnering during individual student planning. The planning process may have been through telephone, email, postal service, face-to-face conversation, or meetings involving several people. Thank you for your time in letting us know about your experience. Please share any comments with us.

NAME (Optional): ________________________________ DATE: _______

ROLE: Educator ___ Family Member ___ Community Resource ___

Individual Planning Process
(Please Check One)

___RtI (Response to Intervention Plan)
___ALP (Advanced Learning Plan)
___IEP (Individualized Education Program)
___ILP (Individual Learning Plan)
___504 Plan
___Classroom – Home (Examples: School-Home-School Note; Behavior Contract)
___FBA/BIP (Functional Behavioral Assessment and/or Behavior Intervention Plan)
___Other (Please Identify):

Please circle the number for each of your responses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. I felt like a team member when we were discussing my student.</th>
<th>Very Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Very Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Written information and progress data (if available) were given to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I know how I can support my student’s academic and/or behavior learning in my situation (home, classroom, agency).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I shared my perspective (home, classroom, agency) in the discussion.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I was considered in decision-making.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I know what goals we are working on together and how we will decide if the plan is working.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. There is a two-way home-school communication plan in place.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COMMENTS:

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

This document is intended to help school communities strategically plan family-school-community partnering within a Response to Intervention (RtI) framework. The shift from traditional “parent involvement” to “family partnering” is new for many educators and families, as is RtI. By reviewing commonly asked questions, a school team can anticipate possible queries from its own stakeholders and plan accordingly. An alternative use is to ask individuals to identify questions, then compile and use the results to address issues.

FAQ Planning

List at least three of your personal or most anticipated questions about RtI family and community partnering. Please consider possible questions from families, school staff, and community resources. Then provide an answer to each question. Developing possible responses can guide your implementation.

1. Q:
   A:

2. Q:
   A:

3. Q:
   A:

Other:
Sample FAQs and Responses

From Educators

1. **How will we have time to be able to partner with families and community resources in RtI?**

   There are no easy answers to this most relevant and important question. Suggestions are as follows: think about all possible communication venues – email, texting, speaker phones etc.; think “out of meetings” – important conversations can be held efficiently between two or three people when there is trust and intent to partner; clarify that meetings will be focused and timely, questions or follow-up can happen before or after; assign “RtI liaisons or consultants” to support partnering as this is new for many staff, families and community resources; think about flexible hours, days and meeting venues to accommodate families. Ask school, family, and community partners how communication and working together can be made efficient, meaningful and effective.

2. **Isn’t it more efficient to discuss the student concerns first and then contact the family?**

   No. The family has important home information to share which provides more accurate data for efficient decision-making. By working with school staff in problem-solving learning or behavior concerns, families learn how to better support their student at home. Also, school staff can “pool resources” with the family. Additionally, the student sees adults in his life working together to support his school success.

3. **How can we involve our families who don’t speak English in the problem-solving process?**

   It is helpful to have a process in place to support families who are English language learners, knowing it is important to help them participate as much as possible. Suggestions are as follows: provide translated forms if possible (work with others in district or state); cultural or language liaisons or interpreters establish trust and explain the process, and concerns; school mental health professionals working with an interpreter to do an individual sociocultural interview (often in the home) to support the family in sharing relevant educational, transition, cultural and social history information which will help inform decision-making.
From Family Members

1. **How and when will I know whether or not my child is making progress?**

   As a problem-solving team member, you will be looking at progress data at determined times with school staff. If you don’t understand the goals, interventions, or measuring tools – just ask. Know this is new for many educators and families.

2. **What will be my role as a problem-solving team member?**

   First, you can ask questions or contribute information at any time during the RtI problem-solving process – you are an equal team member. Other possible roles are as follows: share home information (often best before a meeting) so that team members have the data in decision-making; participate in setting goals, planning interventions, and monitoring progress; tell your student that you are working with the school to help him/her be successful; support learning at home in a way that can work for you and your family.

3. **Will I get copies of information from a problem-solving meeting?**

   Yes. It will be helpful for you to “start a file” to collect the plans and progress monitoring data you receive while your child is in the RtI problem-solving process. If you were to change schools, this information will help new teachers to understand your child’s learning.

From Community Members

1. **What will be my role in RtI and the problem-solving process?**

   If you are invited to a problem-solving meeting, it is because the school staff and/or family know that your information and collaboration will be important in planning for school success. It will be important for you to share your knowledge and expertise. Someone will call you in advance to obtain information, as the problem-solving meetings tend to be short and focused on setting goals, planning interventions, and monitoring progress. You may be involved in coordinating school and home learning. By knowing about RtI, you can help link various facets of a student’s life to support school success.
Colorado RtI Frequently Asked Questions

RtI Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and answers are available in existing RtI materials developed by the Colorado Department of Education. Please refer to the following sources.

**RtI**
FAQs are specifically at the following link: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/rti/downloads/PDF/QandA_RtIModel.pdf](http://www.cde.state.co.us/rti/downloads/PDF/QandA_RtIModel.pdf)

**Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)**
FAQs are specifically addressed in Section 7, page 115.
# Challenges and Solutions

**Name (Optional):**

**Role with Students (Family Member, Educator, Community):**

**Affiliation:**

Please identify what you see as the three biggest challenges in family-school-community partnering for you (or your team, organization etc.) at this point in time. Do for both educators and families. Then please generate some possible, potential solutions to your identified challenges (a suggestion is two solutions per challenge.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educators</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Families</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- [ ] Supporting Learning at Home
- [ ] Outreach to Families
Plan Templates

- Tiered Templates
- Sample Completed Templates
# RtI Family & Community Partnering
## Universal Tier Planning Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School:</th>
<th>Leaders:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Date and Attach Applicable Information: Survey/Needs Assessment: Tiered Checklist: FAQs: Challenges/Solutions:

### Goal(s) to partner with families and/or community resources at the Universal Tier:

### Describe Each Task/ Activity/Action Step

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Data Tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Who Will Do It?”</td>
<td>Funding, Time, People, Materials</td>
<td>By When-Day/Month</td>
<td>Measure to Be Used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. 

2. 

3. 

### Evidence of Success: Are we implementing the plan? Are we reaching our goal? Has family and/or community partnering improved? Share data?

### Next Steps: Revise goals and activities according to effectiveness data. Do we have sufficient and accurate data? Do we have the needed partners involved in planning and implementation?

---

# RtI Family & Community Partnering
## Targeted/Intensive Tiers Planning Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School:</th>
<th>Leaders:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Date and Attach Applicable Information:**
- Survey/Needs Assessment: __
- Tiered Checklist: __
- FAQs: __
- Challenges/Solutions: __

**Goal(s) to partner with families and/or community resources at the Targeted/Intensive Tiers:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe Each Task/ Activity/Action Step</th>
<th>Responsibilities “Who Will Do It?”</th>
<th>Resources Funding, Time, People, Materials</th>
<th>Timeline By When-Day/Month</th>
<th>Data Tool Measure to Be Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evidence of Success:**
- Are we implementing the plan? Are we reaching our goal? Has family and/or community partnering improved? Share data?

**Next Steps:**
- Revise goals and activities according to effectiveness data. Do we have sufficient and accurate data? Do we have the needed partners involved in planning and implementation?

# Sample Completed Universal Tier Planning Template

**School:** High School  
**Leaders:** Principal, Social Worker, Teacher, Family Representative  
**Date:** 8/15/09

### Challenges/Solutions: NA

### Goal(s) to partner with families and/or community resources at the Universal Tier:
Every teacher will have two-way communication with 95% of their families by 12/09.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe Each Task/Activity/Action Step</th>
<th>Responsibilities “Who Will Do It?”</th>
<th>Resources Funding, Time, People, Materials</th>
<th>Timeline By When-Day/Month</th>
<th>Data Tool Measure to Be Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Every teacher will contact each family by email, phone, or postcard within the first month of school; responses will be requested.</td>
<td>Every teacher and family; department chair support</td>
<td>Flexible time during the first month of school; clerical support if needed</td>
<td>10/1/09</td>
<td>Teacher &amp; chair report; family response #s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Every teacher will assign each student to review homework and class rule expectations with his/her family; families will comment by phone, message note, or email.</td>
<td>Each teacher, student and family; department chair support</td>
<td>Time to review and respond to information – grading as an assignment</td>
<td>10/1/09</td>
<td>Student and family response percentages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Every teacher will assign one interactive homework assignment, with family comments required.</td>
<td>Each teacher, student, and family; department chair support</td>
<td>Flexible time to plan, review and respond to comments – grading as an assignment</td>
<td>12/1/09</td>
<td>Student, and family response percentages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evidence of Success:** Are we implementing the plan? Are we reaching our goal? Has family and/or community partnering improved? Share data?
Review data in Professional Learning Communities in January, 2010; report findings and discussion to leaders.

**Next Steps:** Revise goals and activities according to effectiveness data. Do we have sufficient and accurate data? Do we have the needed partners involved in planning and implementation? After data review and discussion reports, analyze effectiveness and survey families, students.

Sample Completed Targeted/Intensive Tiers Planning Template

**School:** Middle School  
**Leaders:** Assistant Principal, Counselor, Family Representative  
**Date:** 8/15/09

**Goal(s) to partner with families and/or community resources at the Targeted/Intensive Tiers:**
Family members will participate in student problem-solving meetings 100% of the time for the 2009-2010 school year. This could be by actual attendance, speakerphone, or by counselor sharing family information, ideas at meeting and communicating afterwards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe Each Task/ Activity/Action Step</th>
<th>Responsibilities “Who Will Do It?”</th>
<th>Resources Funding, Time, People, Materials</th>
<th>Timeline By When-Day/Month</th>
<th>Data Tool Measure to Be Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teachers will work with families to intervene when academic or behavior concerns are first observed.</td>
<td>Teachers and assistant principals, deans</td>
<td>Time to partner with families; Class coverage and/or flexible hours</td>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>Number of family contacts by teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Families will participate as full members on problem-solving teams; families will receive written information and offered opportunity to discuss process.</td>
<td>Counselors</td>
<td>Time to personally contact each family member; Shift from lunch duty</td>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>Number of families and students participating who are invited, receive written information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 90% of families will report positive problem-solving team participation through feedback data, completed after process involvement.</td>
<td>Counselors, teachers, and problem-solving team members</td>
<td>Copies of Planning Team Feedback forms; Clerical support to follow-up if needed and to compile data</td>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>Family responses on Planning Team Feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evidence of Success:** Are we implementing the plan? Are we reaching our goal? Has family and/or community partnering improved? Share data?
Monthly data review by leadership team; adjust and support staff accordingly; record and attach data

**Next Steps:** Revise goals and activities according to effectiveness data. Do we have sufficient and accurate data? Do we have the needed partners involved in planning and implementation? We need to continue to implement and collect data to be used in improving process for next year.

V. Web and Text Resources

- RtI Partnering Resources
- Family-School-Community Partnering Resources
- Colorado Partnering Resources
- Colorado Department of Education RtI Family-School-Community Partnering Resources
RtI Partnering Resources

There are many resources on RtI. Those listed below have been chosen because of their specific information on the family or community partnering component of the RtI process.

**Websites:**

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice  
[http://cecp.air.org/familybriefs/](http://cecp.air.org/familybriefs/)

IDEA Partnership  

Learning Disabilities Association of America  

National Association of School Psychologists  
[www.nasponline.org/resources/handouts/rtiprimer.pdf](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/handouts/rtiprimer.pdf)

National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems  
[http://www.nccrest.org/index.search?q=response+to+intervention&go.x=0&go.y=0&go=go](http://www.nccrest.org/index.search?q=response+to+intervention&go.x=0&go.y=0&go=go)

National Center on Student Progress Monitoring  
[http://www.studentprogress.org/family/default.asp](http://www.studentprogress.org/family/default.asp)

National Center for Learning Disabilities  

National Center on Response to Intervention  

National Research Center on Children with Learning Disabilities  
[http://www.nrcld.org/topics/parents.html](http://www.nrcld.org/topics/parents.html)  

RtI Action Network  
Books:


Family-School-Community Partnering Resources

Many resources are available on family and community involvement in schools. The following resources represent a selected sample, focusing directly on research, partnering process and related documents.

**Websites:**

Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education: Educating Our Children Together  
[http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/EducatingOurChildren_01.cfm](http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/EducatingOurChildren_01.cfm)

Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE)/Harvard Family Research Project  
[http://www.finenetwork.org](http://www.finenetwork.org)

Future of School Psychology Task Force on Family-School Partnerships  
And Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, Human Development Center  
[http://fsp.unl.edu/](http://fsp.unl.edu/)

Iris Center: Collaborating with Families Module  

Kentucky Department of Education: Partnering Document  

National Association of School Psychologists: Family Partnering Position Paper  

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education  

National Network of Partnership Schools  

National Parent Teacher Association  
[http://www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory  
[http://www.nwrel.org/partnerships/](http://www.nwrel.org/partnerships/)
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
http://www.sedl.org/connections/

SPP/APR Calendar
http://spp-apr-calendar.rrfcnetwork.org/explorer/view/id/527?3#category3

UCLA Parent/Home Involvement in the Schools
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/homework.htm

Vanderbilt Family-School Partnership Lab
http://www.vanderbilt.edu/Peabody/family-school/index.html

Books:


National PTA. (2000). Building successful partnerships: A guide for developing parent
and family involvement programs. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Services.


Colorado Partnering Resources

There are numerous resources for family-school-community partnering in Colorado. The following were selected as overall guides which can provide information on other specific related organizations in the state.

**General:**

Colorado Family Education Resource and Training  
[http://cfert.colostate.edu/](http://cfert.colostate.edu/)

Colorado Parent Information and Resource Center  
[http://www.cpirc.org/](http://www.cpirc.org/)

Colorado PTA  

Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition  

The Partnership for Families and Children  

**Focus on Students with Disabilities:**

PEAK Parent Center  

Denver Metro Community Parent Resource Center  
[http://www.denvermetrocrp.org/](http://www.denvermetrocrp.org/)
Colorado Department of Education
RtI Family-School-Community Partnering Resources

There are numerous family and community partnering resources at the Colorado Department of Education. The following have been chosen either for their direct relationship to RtI or for specific contributions to the RtI Family and Community Engagement Module.

Websites:

Colorado Department of Education: Parents and Students
http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_parentstudent.htm

Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee (CSEAC)
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/CSEAC_Paper_RTI.pdf

Early Childhood Initiatives
http://www.cde.state.co.us/early/

English Language Learners with Exceptional Needs (ELLEN)/RtI
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-ELL.asp

Exceptional Student Leadership Unit: Parent
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/parentinfo.asp

Gifted Education Unit
http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/index.htm

Language, Culture, and Equity: Parent Involvement
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cde_english/elau_parentinfo.htm

Positive Behavior Supports: Parent Involvement
http://www.cde.state.co.us/pbs/parentinvolvement.htm

Prevention Initiatives: Parent/School Partnerships
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/pi_parent_school_partnerships.htm

RtI
http://www.cde.state.co.us/rti/

Specific Learning Disabilities
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-PCD.asp
RTI Manuals


VI. References
References


http://www.accountabilitydata.org/New%20DATA%20FEB%202006/2005NCSEA
M_PartB_Watermarked_(21244%20‐%20Activ.pdf


